READ PERSPECTIVES

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– *Kevin Clark*

Irreconcilable Differences: Two Approaches to Educating LEP Students
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How Immigrants Fare in U. S. Education
– *Georges Vernez and Allan Abrahamse with Denise Quigley*

What Does the National Research Council Study Tell Us about Educating Language Minority Children?
– *Charles L. Glenn*

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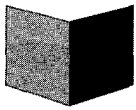

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- "Bilingual Education" (adapted from *Reinventing the Schools: A Radical Plan for Boston*)—Steven F. Wilson

Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 1995):

- "A Review of the U. S. GAO Study on Limited-English Students"—Rosalie P. Porter
- "A Critique of California's Evaluation of Programs for Students of Limited-English Proficiency"—Robert E. Rossier
- "Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority Students: Findings from a Naturalistic Research Study"—Russell Gersten, Thomas J. Keating, and Susan Unok Brengelman

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- "Findings of the New York City Longitudinal Study: Hard Evidence on Bilingual and ESL Programs"—Barbara Mujica
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- "The Importance of Learning English: A National Survey of Hispanic Parents" —Michael La Velle, Center for Equal Opportunity
- "The Language of Immigrants" (Excerpted from *Language Minority Children in School: A Comparative Study of Twelve Nations*) —Charles L. Glenn
- "Follow-up Study on the Bethlehem, PA, School District's English Acquisition Program"—Ann Goldberg
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INTRODUCTION

Scondary school students make up one-third of the 2.4 million limited-English proficient (LEP) students in the U.S. Yet, very little attention has been given in the research literature to the quality of education provided for these students in the secondary schools, that is, grades 7–12. In an apparent attempt to rectify this, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), published in September 1996 one of the few studies in this area, *A Descriptive Study of the ESEA Title VII Educational Services Provided for Secondary School, Limited English Proficient Students.*

It is apparent from the title of the OBEMLA report that it will be narrow in scope, since it only provides information on 100 of the secondary school programs which have received Title VII grants from the federal government. The most useful information contained in this report is in the appended "Review of the Literature." The main body of the report provides case studies of five school programs, and a fair amount of data on how school districts have used their supplemental federal money. Unfortunately, the authors do not follow through on their stated purpose of "identifying successful strategies that are being used to deliver services to the rapidly growing numbers of LEP youth." They evade the responsibility of endorsing one set of teaching methods or way of organizing instruction over another, or of making any judgments on program effectiveness.

In his review of the OBEMLA study, Kevin Clark concludes that the five case studies and the section titled "Lessons Learned" provide the most helpful data for school districts interested in changing and improving their instructional programs for LEP students in their secondary schools. But, he stresses, a valuable opportunity has been missed. It would have benefited teachers, administrators and policy makers even more to know the outcomes in student achievement in these five districts with exemplary programs.

Regardless of its shortcomings, the OBEMLA report deserves a careful reading. Limited-English students who enter U.S. schools in the seventh grade or above present the greatest challenge and are often at the greatest risk of failing to meet high school graduation standards. The next issue of *READ Perspectives*, Spring 1998 (Vol. V:1), will address itself to this problem by featuring a detailed description of a model secondary school program in an academically superior public school district.

Barbara Mujica's review of two recent books that take diametrically opposed positions on the education of language minority children is both informative and provocative. In their books, *Under Attack: The Case against Bilingual Education* (1996) by Stephen Krashen and *Bilingual Education in Massachusetts: The Emperor Has No Clothes* (1996) by Christine H. Rossell and Keith Baker, the authors present, clearly and forcefully, the arguments of the two armed camps in the bilingual education battleground.

Krashen's title is disingenuous since the entire thrust of *Under Attack* is a strong defense of bilingual education. According to Krashen, the ideal education for students whose first language is not English would provide extended instruction in the native language while allowing for the very gradual development of English language skills, supplemented with special efforts to achieve balanced bilingualism and an equal level of literacy in both languages. Little new research is provided to support the benefits of educating language minority children in two languages from Kindergarten through grade 12. Yet, Krashen is, as he has always been, passionate in his dedication to the bilingual education ideal.

Rossell and Baker's book does not start out with a preconceived idea. Instead, it focuses on the actual implementation of bilingual education in the state with the longest experience in this field—Massachusetts—and also provides one of the most comprehensive recent updates of bilingual education research. The authors conducted hundreds of interviews with teachers and administrators, observed classrooms, and reviewed state documents to arrive at their main conclusions. First, the basic idea of bilingual education—that children must be literate in their native language before making the transition to English—is unsubstantiated and invalid; and, second, the Massachusetts bilingual education law is so unreasonable and contrary to common sense that it is routinely circumvented.

The arguments marshaled by the authors of the two books, as presented by the reviewer, will provide ammunition for each reader's preferred position. I strongly recommend the reading of both books in their entirety.

Our third selection is taken from one of a trio of reports produced by RAND's Institute on Education and Training, Center for Research on Immigration Policy. These reports examine the participation of immigrants in the nation's educational systems and the effects of increasing immigration on U.S. schools and institutions of higher education. The last report in the series, *How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education* (1996) by Georges Vernez and Allan Abrahamse, is of special interest to educators of language minority students as it concen-

trates on the participation and performance of immigrant children in U.S. primary and secondary schools and in institutions of higher education. It also identifies those differing factors—both individual and family—that are associated with the educational attainments of immigrants and native born English speakers. Permission was granted to reprint sections of this report in *READ Perspectives,* and we include five short, informative segments in this issue.

The dramatic increase in the number of immigrant children in U.S. schools in the past thirty years raises questions about the ability of educational institutions to meet the needs of this new constituency and about the educational performance of these students. A legitimate concern of educators and of the business community and government is how well immigrant children and the children of immigrants are being prepared to enter the labor force, since this group is of increasing importance to the nation's economic future.

The four conclusions of the study highlighted here are explained more fully in this issue of *READ Perspectives*:

1. Immigrant students and their parents hold more positive attitudes toward schooling and have higher expectations for a college education than native students and their parents. These relative aspirations, however, are not maintained among Hispanic natives and their parents, who have the lowest ratings on indicators of college aspirations. The authors remind us that academic and motivational preparation for college must begin in primary and secondary school, and especially early on at the high school level.

2. All else being equal, the higher educational aspirations of immigrants translate into higher rates of college-attendance for them than for natives.

3. The largest discrepancies in educational attainment are to be found between racial/ethnic groups regardless of immigration status. Just as immigrant and native Hispanics' college preparation and college-attendance rates are consistently the lowest, those of Asians are consistently the highest, with whites and blacks in between. These discrepancies present the greatest public policy challenges.

4. Immigrant youths, most particularly those of Hispanic origin, who enter the country after the age of 15 or so, are less likely to enter the U.S. school system or stay in school than children who come at an earlier age. The number of such children is not negligible.

In summary, the RAND report warns that a growing segment of the student population, primarily of Hispanic origin, lags behind other groups in its educational attainment. Enhancing the educational opportunities for these students is a larger task than schools alone can accomplish. The report suggests that effective strategies be found for overcoming the low income and education of immigrant parents, and for improving the low educational expectations these parents have for their children.

The last, though by no means the least important, selection in this issue is a review by Charles L. Glenn commissioned by the READ Institute. Glenn was one of seven outside reviewers invited to examine the National Research Council's study, *Improving Schooling for Language Minority Children: A Research Agenda*, before its publication in January 1997. The study was funded by the U.S. Department of Education and several private foundations at an estimated cost of $500,000. It is a comprehensive assessment of thirty years of bilingual education research, with recommendations for the future research still to be pursued.

The panel of twelve scholars that produced this study, led by Professor Kenji Hakuta of Stanford University and Dr. Diane L. August of the National Academy of Sciences, represents a group generally acknowledged to be favorable to bilingual education. To their credit, the panel reaches conclusions that do not support the maintenance of bilingual education as the most effective approach for educating language minority children. As presented by Professor Glenn, the most startling conclusions of the study are two that fly directly in the face of the "received wisdom" promoted by advocates for native language instruction:

1. There is no evidence that there will be long-term advantages or disadvantages to teaching limited-English students in the native language.

2. Teaching children to read in English first, instead of in their native languages, does not have negative consequences.

Glenn finds other nuggets of data in the NRC study that contradict some cherished attitudes among educators. He discovers, for example, that there is no research to support the notion that teachers who are themselves members of minority groups are more effective than others who work with children from those same groups. However, there is evidence that emphasizing cultural and ethnic differences in the classroom is counterproductive because it leads to stereotyping, reinforces the differences between language-minority and language-majority children, and, consequently, does not lead to better self-esteem for minority children.

There is much valuable information in the Glenn review of this major study. Although the READ Institute published it originally as the first paper in the new *READ ABSTRACTS* series of Research and Policy Reviews and gave it a wide distribution, we believe this is such an important work that it must appear in *READ Perspectives* as well. Readers who wish to obtain the entire National Research Council study may order it from the National Academy Press in Washington, D.C.

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Editor
READ Perspectives

LEP Students in Secondary Schools: A Critique of the U. S. Department of Education Study

Kevin Clark

Like the elusive "Big Foot" and the Loch Ness Monster, reliable research information about secondary school programs and practices for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students remains largely a mystery. Even though LEP students in secondary grades (7–12) in some states comprise nearly a third of the total limited-English school population, the available information for secondary school policy makers, administrators and teachers is very scarce. For whatever reasons, the great bulk of research and studies on English learners has focused on elementary grade students, leaving secondary schools to their own means when designing and implementing instructional programs for their LEP students. To help fill that gap, the U.S. Department of Education, through its Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), commissioned DevTech Systems, Inc., to conduct a descriptive study of the Title VII education services provided to secondary level LEP students. It has been estimated that 290,000 of the 1.9 million LEP students in the United States received Title VII supported instruction in Fiscal Year 1990 (DevTech, 1996, p. 1). On September 30, 1996, DevTech Systems, Inc., released its 79-page report, which is reviewed in the following pages.

Overview of the Study

Though the study provides educators, policy makers and teachers with a rich summation of what is known to date about secondary level LEP students through its supplemental "Review of the Literature," it falls woefully short in providing any solid evidence which could serve to support a school's choice of educational programs and practices. Though the authors claim in their elaboration on the background and purpose of the study that one of their aims was to "identify successful strategies that are being used to deliver services to the rapidly growing numbers of LEP youth who have differing cultural and linguistic background needs" (p. 4), the study provides little more than anecdotal information about various methods and refuses to endorse one way of organizing programs and instruction over another. As far as providing a much-needed window into the instructional practices that characterize secondary

LEP education, the report instead muddies the water with methodological definitions that are at best fuzzy, and at worst just plain confusing. In short, the study provides a healthy diet of how schools and districts have used supplemental federal Title VII money to provide services to LEP students, but manages to largely skirt the sticky issue of effectiveness and outcomes.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Secondary school LEP students, for a variety of reasons, have been largely ignored in the voluminous studies of what constitutes good educational practice for bilingual learners. Though several studies have made some inroads (BW Associates, 1992), there is still a relative lack of information available to teachers, administrators and policy makers with respect to LEP students in grades 7 through 12. At the same time, it is well known that secondary level LEP students tend to drop-out of school at higher rates than non-LEP students, and that the range of factors that they must deal with as they learn a new language and a new culture is immense. The reasons for this lack of research are fairly obvious: lag time between their increase in the student population and the research process; transience of students; variety of background factors that make generalizations more difficult; and the structure of most secondary schools. Unlike elementary schools— which are oftentimes easier places to gather information—junior, middle and high schools are quite often byzantine in their organization. They frequently resemble small cities, complete with different departments, a multi-tiered administration and a frenetic pace that is characterized by structured time periods, large numbers of staff and a variety of problems and issues that reflect the communities around them. Even defining or describing an educational "program" at a secondary school can prove challenging, since they oftentimes involve so many different people and parts of the "system." The simple question "What is your LEP program" can prove confounding sometimes even to people who work in secondary schools. The study's authors sum it up this way: "...There is little reliable information regarding their (LEP students) educational condition." And while some secondary LEP students achieve academically, little is known about how they succeed. The converse is also unfortunately true; many experience problems and drop out of the system for reasons as diverse as the students themselves.

GOALS AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

To shed more light on secondary school LEP programs and approaches, the U.S. Department of Education, through OBEMLA, commissioned this study which sought to:

1. Collect information on Title VII services currently provided to secondary LEP students; and
2. Identify successful strategies that are being used to deliver services to secondary LEP students.

DevTech Systems, Inc., and its subcontractor, Juarez Associates, implemented the following activities to conduct their study:

1. A review of the literature on secondary level LEP students;
2. Development of a data base that was generated from surveys sent to Title VII schools and districts; and
3. Case studies of five "exemplary" sites that were selected from Title VII grantees that provided services to LEP students in 1993 to ten or more students.

Early on in this section of the report, the authors identify several problem areas that complicate the task of educating secondary school students with a limited knowledge of English:

- The obvious difficulty in providing rigorous, grade appropriate course work to students who have little or no English language skills;
- The unpredictable and sometimes rapid influx of unaccompanied minors among the recent arrivals;
- The large and growing number of secondary level LEP youth who arrive at school illiterate and either unschooled or under-schooled in their first language, making even the provision of primary language instruction a challenge;
- The relatively large number of LEP high school students who are economically disadvantaged and who are obligated to work to help support their families and themselves; and
- The cultural differences and emotional problems that are found in this age group that present barriers to instruction.

Case Studies Projects

To obtain detailed anecdotal information on the high-school age population served, OBEMLA asked DevTech to conduct an in-depth study of five Title VII grantees providing services to secondary school students. The five projects selected for in-depth study were selected based on recommendations from OBEMLA staff, the state directors of bilingual education, and the directors of the Multifunctional Resource Centers (MRCs). The sites selected were:

1. The Bell High School project in the Los Angeles Unified School District, in California;
2. The San Dieguito Union High School District in Encinitas, California;
3. The Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium in Centerville, Maryland;
4. The International High School at La Guardia Community College in Queens, New York; and
5. The Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, Texas.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

As a backdrop to conducting surveys and site visits at the five designated high-quality Title VII programs serving secondary LEP students, the study reviews the available literature and provides details on the characteristics of the secondary LEP population in the country, including: ethnic and linguistic diversity, educational and social needs, population mobility, teacher characteristics, adolescent problems, language acquisition, achievement level comparisons, instructional practices, and social and non-academic services. DevTech and its subcontractor, Juarez and Associates, reviewed more than 150 sources, including databases of the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE), Education Resource and Information Center (ERIC), National Refugee Clearinghouse, National Literacy Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and Bureau of the Census. Databases at the University of California in Los Angeles, Georgetown University, American University, and George Washington University were also reviewed.

Some of the major ideas and information trends that emerged from the literature review are summarized here.

Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity

School districts throughout the country continue to report not only a rapid growth in the number of LEP students they serve, but also an increasing variety in the number of different languages spoken by their students. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, more than 100 languages are spoken by LEP students. This is true in Chicago and New York City districts as well. The study estimates that secondary LEP students number between 20 percent and 33 percent of the total U.S. LEP population, with some states like California being on the higher end (Fleishman and Hopstock, 1993 and California Department of Education Language Census, 1996). As has been customary, Spanish is the primary language of approximately 70 per-

cent of students served in Federal bilingual and ESL programs (OBEMLA, 1990, p.5).

Though the sheer numbers of LEP students represent serious challenges for districts and schools, the study points out what is proving to be an even more difficult scenario: a change in composition of the LEP population, including language diversity, cultural diversity, socioeconomic status, and prior schooling. Factoring in the differences between immigrants and refugees, the study concludes that schools are faced with a staggering array of ethnic, linguistic and academic variables to consider in the design and implementation of educational programs for secondary level LEP students. The study also mentions—but doesn't elaborate on—the unique situation of U.S. born LEP students; those who were born here but who enter school speaking a first language other than English. Though no exact figures have been printed on the number of US-born LEP students currently enrolled in secondary schools, there is at least some emerging data that suggest this number might be higher than previously thought. For example, a study by the U. S. General Accounting Office on LEP students reports that immigrants account for only 43 percent of the limited-English students in our schools. In her review of this study, Porter (1995) asks the obvious question: Are 57 percent of the LEP students native born? She goes on to speculate that this high number could be due to inappropriate identification and could include students from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Whatever the reason, high schools find themselves dealing with an ever increasing number of students born here but whose linguistic profile resembles that of a limited English proficient student.

School Responses to Language and Ethnic Diversity

This diversity among secondary LEP students, the study reports, is largely responsible for the wide variety of programs and practices adopted by secondary schools to meet the challenge. Like their students, the schools that serve them are quite different. Even in the same district, the study notes, schools are not similar, though the most common configuration for high schools includes grades 9 through 12. Others systems include Newcomer Centers for grades 9–12, which are usually for immigrants only, junior high schools with grades 7–9, and high schools with grades 10–12. Given the variance in programs at the feeder elementary schools (early exit bilingual, late-exit bilingual, ESL only, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, two-way immersion, etc.), the report points out the obvious: continuity of program for these students is often lacking. Factors such as limited or non-existent interaction between the feeder schools and secondary schools, poor language assessment and re-assessment practices, and incomplete records make proper placement of secondary LEP students more difficult. BW Associates (1992)

found that in-depth assessments of secondary LEP students were seldom made and that, despite their differences, LEP students were typically grouped together for instruction.

The study also briefly mentions the ever-changing ebb and flow of state policies with respect to educating LEP students, and the more local sociopolitical and historical backgrounds in which schools must educate these students. Despite such a pronouncement, the authors provide nothing further to explain this claim.

LEP Student Mobility

A common problem for secondary LEP students is poor attendance due to family mobility. Though patterns of mobility vary enormously across ethnic groups, it is generally highest in communities that serve as points of entry for immigration or in communities with high concentrations of migrant workers (BW Associates, 1992). Mobility wreaks havoc on credit accumulation, course completion and graduation schedules. Students who transfer between districts find themselves out of step with the new requirements, and feel as if they are starting over. Also, at the secondary level some students do not move from school to school, but instead disappear for long periods of time during the academic year. The study points out that many immigrant families do not understand U.S. educational expectations regarding uninterrupted school attendance, and that immigrant adolescents and their parents lack knowledge about the need to accrue high school credits in order to graduate (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992, p. 59).

Obstacles to Instruction

For many secondary school LEP students, learning a new language is just one of many issues that confront them in their daily school lives. In addition to academic challenges, the study notes that many LEP students face economic pressures and problems of having to adapt to a new culture. Many must work to contribute to the family income. They also have social, legal and health needs. Moreover, they often find themselves on the bottom rung, both academically and socially. For those who lack schooling in their primary language, the picture is even more bleak. The demands of the curriculum and the short time they have in which to master English leaves many LEP high school students significantly behind their English-speaking classmates (Collier, 1987, p. 617).

Because of these accumulating pressures, many secondary LEP students are at risk of failing or dropping out. Indeed, limited English proficiency has been identified as a risk factor in the research on dropouts (Steinberg, et al., 1984). The statistics on high school drop-out rates for LEP secondary students is star-

tling: Spanish speakers age 16 to 24 have a higher drop-out rate than their English-speaking peers or speakers of other European and Asian languages (McArthur, 1993). Hispanics, the study notes, have the highest drop-out rates of all ethnic groups (CCSSO, 1993). The study also mentions in a short section concluding the literature review that youth gangs feed on many of the negative factors affecting this group of students. "In many cases," the report reads, "gangs provide a structure and a sense of direction."

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS AND STAFF

The school districts featured in this study, like many others across the country, face severe and on-going shortages of qualified teachers who could teach students in their primary language. Interestingly, not all of the projects relied on primary language instruction, so the relevance of this observation is debatable. Nonetheless, the report presents a bleak picture of the number of teachers qualified to provide instruction in Spanish, Vietnamese and several other Asian languages. The study correctly notes, though, that teachers need to be more fully trained and competent in how to provide high-quality instruction—in whatever language—to secondary LEP students. In one particularly cogent sentence, the report states that "given the influx of language minority students, the context of teaching is changing" (p. 14). To meet this challenge, the report continues, "teacher training must produce professionals who not only are competent but who also can create optimal learning environments for language minority students" (p. 14). The report also points out that the knowledge and abilities for teaching LEP students are not just for "bilingual" teachers, but rather should be a part of every teacher's abilities. A Development Associates survey of Title VII teachers (Hopstock et al., 1993, vol. II) reports that high school teachers who teach LEP students have received training in the following topics:

Effective practices in instructing LEP students	52.4%
Awareness of cultural differences and implications for instruction of LEP students	66.1%
Teaching English to LEP students	42.9%
Language acquisition theory and its implications for instruction of LEP students	29.5%
Teaching science to LEP students	12.2%
Teaching native language arts to LEP students	13.7%
Teaching mathematics to LEP students	6.7%

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

No more muddled section of this study exists than the short discussion on instructional practices. Instead of identifying and discussing the various instructional methodologies generally associated with secondary LEP education, the report offers a thinly veiled endorsement of primary language instruction—though without definition—and reviews the Illinois state law mandating such. The first sentence of this section reads as follows: "Generally, course offerings at bilingual high schools vary according to the availability of bilingual teachers" (p. 14). What is a "bilingual" high school? What is the definition of a "bilingual" teacher at the secondary level? The implied assumption seems to be that "bilingual" instruction is the preferred mode of instructing secondary school students and that the attempt to provide this influences program planning at this level.

From there the authors provide a sweeping one-sentence summation of those methods which assist students in the development of English. "These (approaches) include focusing on key concepts, using more visual and hands-on experiences, and encouraging students to use their native languages and providing native language materials for them, even though the classroom teacher may not understand the language" (p. 14). From there, it just gets cloudier. While completely avoiding the issue of effectiveness or outcomes, the study instead defines (and very poorly) the following terms: ESL, sheltered content teaching, cooperative learning, tutoring, team teaching, active learning, interactive methodologies, and computer assisted instruction. It is completely unclear whether the teaching methods just named were used as criteria in the evaluation of the case studies schools or how they relate to the other sections of the report.

CONCLUSIONS FROM FIVE CASE STUDIES PROJECTS

This section of the report covers fifty-two pages and provides extensive—though sometimes vague—information on the five sites visited. The fieldwork was conducted over the course of two or three days of interviews and classroom observations. Data were collected on program features, program implementation, community, district and school demographics, students ethnicity and languages, and teacher training and parent involvement activities. Interestingly, the authors of the study take the opportunity in this section to issue a disclaimer as to rendering a judgment on the effectiveness of what they studied. "It was not part of the scope of work under this contract to establish the superiority of any method over the others," the study reads. "Rather, the study provides examples of a variety of approaches that have worked under a variety of circumstances" (p. 18). The study then invokes an evaluation by BW

Associates (1992), which found that it was impossible to identify a best approach because:

- The comparable student-outcome data needed to judge one programmatic approach versus others did not exist (in California);
- All but exemplary schools probably fail to implement their programs fully, regardless of the LEP programmatic approach that they adopt;
- The same programmatic approach is implemented in different ways at different schools, so that there is much variation in practice for the same approach; and
- Circumstances vary greatly from school to school and district to district, making meaningful comparisons across programmatic approaches impossible.

It should be noted that early on in the report the authors listed as one of their objectives the identification of "successful strategies that are being used to deliver services to the rapidly growing numbers of LEP youth who have differing cultural and linguistic background needs" (p. 4). Moreover, in the executive summary that precedes the study, the authors state that "These case studies provide a view of 'best practices' that work in these districts" (p. iii). As in other studies that involve issues of methodological efficacy, it seems easier to describe than to evaluate them. Given these five so-called "exemplary" programs it seems as though the study ignored the opportunity to report on the outcomes of these programs. Instead, what follows is an extended section that at times reads like a Title VII grant application. On the plus side, the case studies provide an interesting description of several different projects. For administrators and educators, the "Lessons Learned" sections provide several important considerations for any school or district interested in reconfiguring their current secondary school LEP program.

Taking the case studies projects in their totality, at least three commonalities emerge from the information presented in this study:

1. Title VII services were targeted for a specific segment of the LEP population, instead of trying to be all things to all students. By specializing services, it appears as though these projects were able to maximize impact in the relatively short amount of time they have these students;
2. Coordinating services among various agencies and providers enhanced the usefulness of Title VII funds. The degree to which Title VII funds and services were woven into other school and district funds, programs and services seemed to correlate with efficiency and impact;

3. Training for both language and content teachers was essential. Moving the discussion of teaching LEP students to a school-wide issue served to bring a wider range of teachers into the professional development component. For all projects featured here, the development of staff capacity was established as a priority.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the literature review, the examination of 100 Title VII grants, and the five case studies, the report concludes with a brief review of findings that is largely a re-hash of the case studies schools report. Included here are tributes to their use of resources, the building of staff capacity to address LEP students' needs, and the utilization of instructional strategies that blended English acquisition with content course mastery. To enhance the capacity of schools to meet the needs of the secondary school LEP population the report suggests—in no particular order—that several areas are in need of improvement and refinement.

1. Information on the wide range of issues that secondary LEP students present to educators needs to be disseminated. This would include information on the wide disparity between students' educational backgrounds and their language needs, as well as on effective strategies to employ. The study calls on OBEMLA to find ways to disseminate research on secondary LEP students to all high schools across the nation that now or in the near future will need to serve LEP students. The authors urge OBEMLA to ensure that this information is available to small, rural schools and districts in addition to those larger schools and districts that sometimes have more resources to meet the educational needs of this group of students.
2. The methods and protocols used by Title VII projects to report information on their students and the strategies and approaches employed need to be improved. Printed materials from grantees, the report says, could be a key source of information for educators and researchers. However, the current method of presenting information makes its organization and use difficult. The report emphasizes that "a greater understanding of who is served and what is provided by Title VII needs to be captured."
3. More attention needs to be given to secondary school LEP students' needs. "We found that very little attention has been given the secondary school LEP students even though this grade level presents the greatest challenges," the authors write. "Secondary school LEP students may be greatest at risk in not meeting new educational standards" (p. 73).

CONCLUSIONS

There is perhaps no other group of students who can challenge a school's instructional program as can LEP students in grades 7–12. Their varied levels of prior education, native language and English proficiency, and the social issues that affect their lives make for a complex tapestry. Moreover, in many cases these students are expected to adapt rapidly to a high school system that is usually hectic, highly structured and generally impersonal. These obstacles notwithstanding, schools and districts across the country are crafting various approaches to educating these students, some of which are reviewed in this study. While the Title VII projects cited here have been effective in designing programs that meet their students' needs it is clear that any conclusions based upon the existing research on this student population are problematic. First, if secondary schools are going to design programs for LEP students they need to know what "programs" are available. Second, and perhaps most important, they need to have data that reasonably and accurately demonstrates the outcomes of a particular program design. This study gives us some program ideas, but unfortunately it passes on the opportunity to report in a logical and comparative way the data collected from their exemplary schools. Like tabloid reports of "Big Foot" and soft focus photographs of the Loch Ness Monster, this study only illuminates the mystery. What we need are answers.

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Irreconcilable Differences: Two Approaches to Educating LEP Students

Barbara Mujica, Ph.D.

Two recent studies of the effectiveness of educational programs for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students reflect radically different perspectives. In spite of its title, Stephen Krashen's *Under Attack: The Case against Bilingual Education* (1996) is an impassioned defense of bilingual education in general and of native-language instruction in particular. In contrast, *Bilingual Education in Massachusetts: The Emperor Has No Clothes* (1996), by Christine H. Rossell and Keith Baker, is an investigative study that recommends that native tongue instruction be kept to a minimum and used only with students who know absolutely no English.

Stephen Krashen's *Under Attack: The Case against Bilingual Education*

Krashen's slim tome (only 104 pages, 31 of which comprise an Appendix containing critiques of studies of bilingual education and an Index) is more a rehash of conventional arguments for native language instruction than a presentation of new research. For Krashen, native language instruction is the fundamental component of bilingual education. Therefore, he favors programs that keep children in native language classes as long as possible, even after they are fluent in English. Krashen starts from two widely disputed premises:

1. that obtaining knowledge in their primary language makes children more receptive to English; in other words, the more knowledge children gain in their first language, the better they will learn English; and,
2. that literacy transfers across languages.

Thus, once children have learned to read in their native language, they will be able to learn to read more easily in a second language. He further argues that children who are able to use language to solve problems in their native tongue will be able to transfer that skill to another tongue.

Building on these premises, Krashen theorizes that good bilingual programs must contain three elements:

1. an English-language component provided in the form of ESL (English as a Second Language) or sheltered subject matter classes (those in which subjects such as Social Studies or Science are presented in English, but in a linguistically controlled environment that ensures student comprehension);
2. subject matter presented exclusively in the children's native language; and,
3. literacy development in the first language.

He also recommends that once children have attained fluency in English, they continue developing competence in their first language in order to achieve a "healthy sense of biculturalism" (p. 5).

In order to illustrate his proposition, he draws an analogy between an American arriving in Paris and a foreign student learning English. The American who receives ample cultural information about Paris in English before he leaves will be able to navigate around the city more easily than one who doesn't. From this example Krashen jumps to the conclusion that the student who receives ample subject matter instruction in his own language will be able to learn English more easily. This is a flimsy argument because there is a huge difference between cultural information and linguistic skill. Furthermore, the American in Paris will have to apply the newly learned information to practical situations immediately and constantly. The child who is taught for years in his native language will not have the opportunity to use her developing English skills as frequently as if she were in an English-speaking environment (a structured immersion program or a regular classroom), or if she were in contact with native English-speaking children during most of the school day. Krashen argues that children in bilingual programs are indeed getting comprehensible input in English, and that may be the case in some of the best programs. However, one of the major complaints against bilingual education is that children are not getting enough exposure to English.

The bilingual education plan that Krashen views as ideal takes years to complete. In the beginning stage of English-language learning, children are taught their core subjects in their native language; they are taught English in special ESL classes, but are mainstreamed (placed in regular classes) for Art, Music and Physical Education in order to avoid segregating them entirely from the rest of the student body. At the intermediate level, they are taught Language Arts and Social Studies in their native language, English in ESL classes, and Math and Science in Sheltered English (structured immersion) classes; they are still mainstreamed for Art, Music, and Physical Education. At the advanced

level, they continue developing reading and writing skills in their native language and learn English in ESL classes; they study Social Studies, and Language Arts in Sheltered classes. Finally, at the fourth stage, they are mainstreamed, but continue to learn their native languages in special language maintenance classes. Ideally, this gradual exit program would produce fully bilingual youngsters, capable of functioning perfectly in both languages.

One of the major flaws is obvious from Krashen's own discussion of the "early exit problem." Citing Cummins's 17-year-old study, Krashen argues that children must not be moved up to the next stage until they are ready, which means that they may spend more than one year at any level. He believes that even after they have achieved conversational fluency in English, children must be kept in native language classes until they achieve "academic language ability" (literacy and background knowledge that will enable them to function in a regular class) (p. 10). However, this may never occur for, as Rossell and Baker show, the testing methods routinely used to place LEP children in different programs make it impossible for some children ever to exit native language classes. Because children are scored on a bell curve, a certain number of students will always fall at the bottom of the spectrum. That is, if all those who score below, say, the 35th percentile are placed in native language classes, students who repeatedly score at the bottom of the spectrum will always remain in such classes. In fact, as Rossell and Baker show, according to these tests, even a number of American-born, monolingual, English-speaking children will never appear to be competent enough in "academic language" to function in a regular classroom because a certain number will always fall below the 35th percentile.

Although it seems nonsensical to assume that children already fluent in English will become more sophisticated in that language by receiving instruction in another language, Krashen argues that the more prepared children are in their native tongue, the more easily they will learn "academic" English. For Krashen, a main objective of bilingual education is development and maintenance of the child's first language. He not only argues to keep children in native language classes after they are fluent in English, but notes that by continuing in language maintenance even after they are mainstreamed, *"children never need to exit the bilingual program"* at all (p. 11). Krashen clearly sees this as a plus, even though bilingual education was initially conceived as a means of helping LEP children to mainstream as quickly as possible, not as a means of permanently isolating them into language groups.

Naturally, Krashen recognizes that when teachers are not available in a particular language, or when the foreign population of school speaks many dif-

ferent languages, a distinct model must be adopted. (In fact, the only language for which there are large numbers of teachers and clusters of students routinely large enough to fill entire classes is Spanish.) In these cases, students may be placed in ESL pull-out programs in which they attend regular classes but are pulled out for special instruction in English, or else they may attend structured immersion classes, which allow for an English-speaking teacher to instruct children of different linguistic backgrounds. However, even in these situations, Krashen encourages teachers to use the child's native language if they know it, or else, to take advantage of aides fluent in the language. Of course, it seems logical that if a child is struggling to communicate, a wise and humane teacher will help her over the hurdle by allowing her to speak a few sentences in her native language, provided the teacher or an aide understands it. On the other hand, conversing for extended periods with a segment of the class in a language other than English may produce the adverse effect of segregating certain children from the rest of the group, or else it may lead certain children to develop a crutch that will retard their learning English.

More problematical still is Krashen's insistence that educators encourage parents to use the first language at home. Parents most certainly have every right to speak their native language at home, but if they choose not to, that must also be their privilege. People leave their native countries for many reasons, sometimes in traumatic circumstances. Some parents may have definite reasons for wanting to break with the past. For educators to presume to tell parents what language to speak in their homes would be an intolerable intrusion.

Opponents of bilingual education often point out that success in this country is quite possible without special language programs.. Over the decades, millions of newcomers have come to the United States and moved up the socioeconomic ladder without the benefits of such programs. However, Krashen argues, these people often did receive *de facto* bilingual education because they immigrated later on in their academic careers and therefore, had already received a great deal of subject matter instruction in their native languages. Having achieved literacy in their mother tongues, it was easier for them to acquire English. Rossell and Baker counter this contention by pointing out that many other factors must be taken into account when examining the language acquisition of foreigners who immigrate to the United States as adolescents or young adults. They cite studies showing that the most significant of these factors is age; people in this age group tend to learn a second language faster than others whether or not they were educated in their own countries. Other factors are motivation, intelligence, access to learning materials, and so on. However, even without these studies, much of Krashen's argument seems farfetched. The three people he cites—from Hong Kong, Korea, and Vietnam—

probably did not study the American Civil War or Faulkner in their schools abroad. Although their knowledge of math and science might have helped them in the U.S. educational system, it is unlikely that much of the other subject matter transferred. Furthermore, one of the three was already competent in English, having studied for six years in British schools in Hong Kong.

Krashen also considers the case of children who come to the U.S. very young or were born in this country, yet do not speak English at the time they enter kindergarten. Some, he admits, succeed very well without bilingual education. However, once again, he argues that these children do receive *de facto* bilingual education because they live in an English-speaking environment. With regard to Richard Rodriguez, a successful author whose autobiography *Hunger of Memory* recounts how he learned English in elementary school without the help of any special program, Krashen comments that "it is likely that he received a considerable amount of comprehensible input from his classmates and friends." That, of course, is exactly the point that opponents of bilingual education make. Rodriguez was in class primarily with English-speakers. By exposing children as much as possible to English, both in the classroom and in the schoolyard, we increase their opportunity to learn the language well. By isolating them in native language classes year after year, we isolate them and create linguistic ghettos within the school.

The crux of Krashen's argument is the facilitation theory, the principal proponent of which is Jim Cummins. In 1978 Cummins proposed a theoretical model based on the "threshold" hypothesis, according to which an LEP child must reach a certain threshold of linguistic competence in his native language in order to transfer to English without suffering cognitive disadvantages, and the "developmental interdependence hypothesis," according to which reading skills acquired in a child's first language facilitate her learning to read in a second. Krashen argues at length that literacy transfers across languages and cites numerous studies to prove that if children learn to read in one language, they can read in another. He points out that the underlying process of reading is the same for all languages, even those with vastly different alphabets, and the process of development of literacy is the same for different languages. He sums up his position by saying, "Once you can read, you can read." Although much of the research he cites is fifteen or twenty years, old, the data is convincing. It seems likely that once children grasp the concept that a series of written signs represents a word, they can apply this concept in a variety of situations.

The question is, once they are conversant in English, why spend time teaching this skill in the native language? Given the fact that the school day consists of a limited number of periods, and polls show that parents of LEP children say

that their first priority is for their children to learn English, why not employ the most efficient means of achieving that goal? Even if it is true that reading skills transfer from one language to another (a theory that many studies dispute), why spend hours and hours of classroom time developing these skills in the native language when, once children know some English, it is more productive to teach them directly in that language? For Krashen, the answer is clearly that teaching the primary language is in itself a goal. However, this goal is usually achievable only in Spanish because it is only for Spanish that large numbers of teachers are available and students exist in sufficient numbers to fill separate classes.

In recent years a number of studies have shown that children subjected to prolonged native-language instruction qualify for mainstreaming at a much lower rate than those who are not. *Educational progress of students in bilingual and ESL Programs: A Longitudinal Study,* published by the New York City Board of Education in 1994, provides evidence that, in New York, most students in bilingual education classes do not become sufficiently fluent in English after three years to be mainstreamed, while children in ESL classes fare much better. Particularly interesting is the break-down by language group. The statistics show significant disparity between exit rates. For example, while well over 80 percent of Korean-, Chinese*- or Russian-speaking students qualify for mainstreaming after three years, less than 60 percent of Spanish- or Haitian Creole-speaking students do so. Indeed, 91.8 percent of the Korean-speaking children exited special LEP programs after three years, while only 50.6 percent of the Spanish-speaking children did. Significantly, Spanish- and Haitian Creole-speaking children were usually placed in bilingual programs, while Korean-, Chinese- and Russian-speaking children were usually placed in ESL programs.

In addition to this report, Krashen considers another done in Los Angeles showing that only between 3.1 percent and 15 percent of students in bilingual education programs were able to transfer into regular classes. In addition, records from Denver indicate that over a two-year period, 40 percent of students tested made no progress on an English proficiency test. In 1994–95, just 4.9 percent of LEP students qualified for mainstreaming. As a result, the district has determined to move non-English speakers into Sheltered English classes more rapidly ("Saving a Bilingual Program").

However, Krashen dismisses findings from studies that contradict his premise on the grounds that they do not take into consideration the socio-economic level of the students involved. He quotes Luis Reyes, a member of the New

*Mandarin or Cantonese.

York City Board of Education, who insists that the discrepancy between the exit rates of Hispanic or Haitian students and those of students of Korean, Chinese or Russian background is due to "external factors" rather than teaching methods. He concludes that it is likely that "Reyes is correct: Russian, Korean and Chinese speakers came from more affluent homes" (p. 37). This may or may not be true; Krashen offers no evidence at all to support his claim.

Furthermore, he fails to take into consideration the success of approaches such as the one adopted by the English Acquisition Program in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The district's superintendent, Thomas J. Doluisio, was concerned about the length of time it took students in bilingual programs to qualify for mainstreaming and about the high drop-out rate of Hispanic students, which did not appear to improve despite their participation in bilingual programs. Consequently, he proposed switching to a plan that would focus on the development of English proficiency. The English Acquisition Program, initiated in 1993, includes approximately 1,300 students, 86 percent of whom come from Spanish-speaking homes that are economically disadvantaged. Although it is too early to conduct a large-scale study of the type done by New York City Schools, the results so far have been promising.

Likewise, "bilingual immersion," which is actually English language immersion, used in El Paso, Texas, has produced excellent results. As in Bethlehem, in El Paso the LEP population consists mostly of disadvantaged Hispanic children who are taught in English from the first day of the first grade. Gersten concludes that this system "leads to more rapid, successful, and increased integration of Latino students into the mainstream, with no detrimental effects in any area of achievement" (Gersten, iii). Yet Krashen ignores this evidence of the effectiveness of structured immersion programs with economically disadvantaged Hispanics.

Instead, he expends a great deal of energy arguing that SES (socio-economic status) does indeed affect student success. He argues that children from higher SES families learn academic English more rapidly than disadvantaged children because they receive a better education in their primary language, have parents that are more educated and better able to assist them with their school work, live in a print-rich environment, have better access to libraries, have a quiet area in which to study, and are generally healthier, since they are more likely to have a good diet. No one, I think, would argue with these conclusions. Not only LEP students, but all students, tend to do better when they have parents who are willing and able to help them and can provide the tools they need to succeed. More affluent families are better equipped to supply the intellectual and material supports that enable youngsters to move ahead. But

there is no evidence that this must be done in one language or another. The data that Krashen provides does not support his conclusion that "our bilingual programs are on the right track when they provide literacy and subject matter knowledge in the primary language. In doing this, they replicate those aspects of the high SES child's home environment that are helpful for school" (p. 39). Indeed, far more important than high SES may be the family's expectations, the importance that the parents attach to education whether or not they are educated themselves, and the child's own motivation. Our history is replete with examples of poor immigrants—Italians, Jews, Chinese—who succeeded in spite of low SES and language barriers.

In spite of the contradictory data regarding attitudes toward bilingual education, Krashen concludes that the public is, in fact, overwhelmingly in favor of native-language instruction. He rejects conclusions by Porter, Chavez, Snipper, and other researchers based on evidence that parents of LEP children, including Hispanic parents, oppose teaching children in their native languages. Krashen bases his opinion on the wording of surveys that imply that the more native language instruction children receive, the less English instruction they will receive. However, as Rossell and Baker show, this is exactly the case. Parents must understand that, since there are a finite number of hours in the school day, native language instruction involves a trade-off. Many parents, not just those of LEP children, would like their children to be perfectly bilingual, but when more hours are devoted to instruction in, say, Chinese or Spanish, fewer can be devoted to math, science, social studies, or English. Rossell and Baker present evidence that when parents are asked to identify areas in the school curriculum that might be eliminated so that more native-language instruction could be included, they are loath to do so.

Krashen argues that the press is biased against bilingual education, but he fails to provide documentation to back up his argument. Furthermore, he does not recognize that the very term "bilingual education" is loaded. For one thing, many different kinds of teaching methods, including some that provide little or no native-language instruction, are categorized as "bilingual." Indeed, some of the success attributed to "bilingual education" results from the fact that programs that do not use native language instruction at all are able to quickly mainstream LEP students. For example, Krashen lauds the El Paso program, calling it a successful example of bilingual education, without taking into consideration that bilingual immersion as practiced in El Paso is actually structured immersion; children are taught almost exclusively in English. As Rossell and Baker point out, some school districts use the word "bilingual" to describe their programs because state law mandates bilingual education and provides funding for it.

Another issue that Krashen avoids is the confusion generated among non-specialists by the term "bilingual education." "If you ask people if they support the development of the first language at the expense of English and school success, nearly all will say 'no,'" writes Krashen. "But if you ask them if they support bilingual education, a surprising number will say that they do" (p. 49). However, as Rossell and Baker show, most people don't know what bilingual education is. They assume that it is truly bilingual, with as much time allotted to English as the student's native language. If we ask parents—those of English-speaking children as well as those of LEP students—if they would like their children to be perfectly bilingual, many will say yes. Who wouldn't? However, as Krashen himself demonstrates, bilingual education often provides less than an hour of English instruction a day. My own limited surveys of public opinion on bilingual education reveal that most people who say they favor it change their minds when they realize that it often entails mostly native-language instruction. Although Krashen attributes opposition to prolonged instruction in the mother tongue to those with "xenophobic and racist points of view" (p. 49), this is a complex issue that cannot be resolved merely with name-calling.

With or without bilingual education, a large number of LEP children learn English. Krashen cites studies done between 1970 and 1994 to show that English is the dominant language for many first or second generation immigrants of Mexican, Cuban or Puerto Rican background. For example, according to a 1975 study of Mexican-Americans living in Austin, 89 percent of the children in grades 1–3 used English informally, while only 1 percent used Spanish. According to a 1982 survey of Cuban-American high-school students between 14 and 18 years old, 80 percent of whom were born in Cuba and came to the U.S. before age 10, 25 percent preferred to speak English and 42 percent were equally comfortable in both Spanish and English. A 1984 survey of Chicano families in San Antonio, most of whose members were born in the U.S., shows that about 74 percent of the children speak to their parents in English. A 1992 survey of Cuban-American high school seniors shows that only 18 percent are Spanish dominant. In spite of the data showing that many Hispanic children use English socially and even at home, Krashen favors maintaining instruction in Spanish as long as possible because "language use may or may not be an accurate reflection of proficiency" (p. 55). "Just because a child has some English competence," he writes, "does not mean he or she is ready to do the entire program in English" (p. 47). His reason is that "acquisition of conversational English...does not necessarily entail the acquisition of academic English" (p. 51). No one would argue, I think, that many of these children, although fluent in English, may need special attention to improve their skills. However, Rossell and Baker show that continuing to teach them in Spanish

after they know some English hampers rather than develops their acquisition of English.

Krashen concludes that because opposition to bilingual education has become so intense, it is necessary to inoculate it from attack. In order to do this, he argues, educators must convince the public that bilingual education is in fact succeeding. Since, he believes, it is imperative that LEP children learn to read in their native languages in order to learn to read in English, he suggests that schools, libraries and families provide more books in those languages. He includes data to prove that the families of most LEP children do not own many books in their native tongues, and libraries and schools are painfully lacking in reading materials in languages other than English. Although he notes that young LEP children are often drawn towards English-language books rather than toward books in their mother tongues, even when these are available, he insists that stocking schools and libraries with books in Spanish, Cantonese or Vietnamese will go a long way toward improving these children's literacy. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with educational institutions providing reading materials in languages other than English, assuming they have ample funds to provide English-language materials as well. Doing so would benefit not only LEP students but also non-LEP youngsters studying a foreign language or simply interested in browsing through foreign texts. However, placing the books on the library shelf is no guarantee that students will use them. Krashen does not deal with problems of low motivation, lack of leisure time to read or the tendency of youngsters to want to conform to the majority culture.

ROSSELL AND BAKER'S *BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS: THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES*

While Krashen starts from the premise that native-language development and maintenance are desirable in all cases, Rossell and Baker do not approach the data with a preconceived position. Instead, they examine the different types of instruction available to LEP children in one state, Massachusetts, and draw certain conclusions based on their findings. The civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s motivated politicians to focus on educational practices that could be considered discriminatory. The wide gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in achievement tests was interpreted by some as an indication that Hispanics suffered from linguistic discrimination in school because they were regularly placed in classes with English-speaking non-Hispanics. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968, also known as Title VII, addressed the needs of language minority students, and Hispanic advocates rallied around the principle of bilingual education. The first state to enact its own legislation in this area was Massachusetts, which in 1971 passed Chapter 71A, the Transitional

Bilingual Education Act, requiring native-language instruction for LEP children. Massachusetts is an appropriate example for Rossell and Baker to study because transitional bilingual education (TBE) has been in place there for over twenty-five years, although almost no data on the effectiveness of the program is available.

Massachusetts is one of only nine states to require transitional bilingual education (TBE) in all school districts in which there are a certain number of LEP students. Only twenty LEP students in a single language group in a school district—an average of fewer than two in each grade—prompts native-language instruction in a separate classroom taught by a bilingual certified teacher. Chapter 71A specified that TBE programs be full-time, that all courses and subjects be presented in the native language as well as in English, that children be taught to read and write in their native language as well as in English, and that they be taught the history and culture of their native countries. However, Rossell and Baker note that observations of actual classroom practice of programs designated "bilingual" show that instructors use a variety of methods to teach LEP students. Although the state decrees that LEP students receive native-language instruction, only Spanish-speaking elementary school students actually do, and even this group does not receive it consistently. What allows districts to comply with the law in the case of Spanish-speaking LEP students even some of the time is the large size of the Spanish-speaking population, which makes it possible to fill entire classes with Spanish-speaking children, and the availability of Spanish-speaking teachers. LEP students who speak other foreign languages are almost always placed in structured immersion classes or regular classes with ESL pull-out, although "for political, legal or funding reasons they may be called TBE" (p. 8). Thus, non-Hispanic LEP students receive instruction almost exclusively in English. Indeed, much of the evidence for the success of bilingual education is gleaned from positive results produced by classes that are not bilingual at all, but rather structured English immersion. However, rather than a cause for complaint, the flexible implementation of TBE in Massachusetts has, in the opinion of Rossell and Baker, "kept the law from collapsing under its own weight" (p. 2).

Rossell and Baker call the variety of programs for LEP students in Massachusetts a "well-kept secret" (p. 7). Implementation of the Massachusetts bilingual education law has been spotty mainly because this law is incompatible with the state's fiscal realities. No school district with only twenty LEP students of one language group could afford to provide self-contained classes for their instruction; such classes would be minuscule.

Another issue is instructors' qualifications. TBE teachers need not meet the

general certification requirement; while they must be able to speak and read the non-English language they are teaching, they must demonstrate only communicative skills in English. Teachers who are not comfortable in English tend to teach in the children's native tongue as much as possible. However, these teachers are required to provide English instruction as well, so sometimes LEP students are forced to study the language with a teacher whose own English is deficient.

Because there are so many variables involved— the language skill of teachers, the availability of written materials in the native language, the size of the language minority population, parental support for the program, the children's home environment, etc.—sophisticated techniques must be used to evaluate TBE. At the moment, there is still little valid data available by which to assess the efficiency of bilingual education. However, since both the high school graduation rate and achievement scores for Hispanics in Massachusetts continue to be much lower than for white non-Hispanics, there is cause for concern. TBE must be reexamined. Rossell and Baker point out that in spite of widespread acceptance of TBE by policy makers, we still don't really know how effective it is. They cite numerous studies, some of them by avid supporters of bilingual education, that throw into question the effectiveness of long-term native-language instruction, but arrive at no definite conclusions.

In order to assess more accurately the soundness of bilingual education, they read more than 500 books and reviews, of which 300 were program evaluations. After analyzing data from these 300 program evaluations, Rossell and Baker found that only 72 conformed to the standards of scientific study. Studies that conformed to a methodologically sound research design analyzed the test data for students randomly assigned to "treatment" and control groups. In the case that this was not done, they matched students in the treatment and comparison groups on factors that influence achievement (age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, student motivation, parental support, cognitive ability, place of birth, etc.) or else statistically controlled for these factors. In addition, methodologically sound studies had the following characteristics: they measured outcome in English using normal curve equivalents, raw scores, percentiles, etc.; they omitted subjects who had received additional educational interventions (tutoring, etc.); and they applied appropriate statistical tests. After reviewing the results of these studies, Rossell and Baker found "no consistent research support for transitional bilingual education as a superior instructional practice for improving the English language achievement of LEP children" (p. 49).

A traditional argument for native-language instruction is that it allows children to learn the concepts in subject areas such as math while they learn En-

glish. However, Rossell and Baker found that "in developing math proficiency, TBE fared no better when compared to submersion [no special help at all] or to regular classroom instruction with ESL pullout" (p. 50). According to their research, the facilitation theory supported by Krashen does not hold true, while the time-on-task principle, which maintains that the amount of time spent learning a subject is the greatest predicator of achievement in that subject, does. In other words, children who spend more time learning English and learning subject matter in English will become more proficient in speaking, reading and writing English. However, Rossell and Baker stress that in order for instruction in English to be successful, *effective* learning must take place. That is, children must comprehend what is going on in the classroom. Submersion, in which LEP children are simply placed in regular classes, is unproductive, at least at first, because a child who knows no English will not be able to follow the lesson. However, as children become more competent in English, "the greater time spent on English in the submersion situation would give [them] an advantage during this later time period" (p. 61). Rossell and Baker note that studies by Ramirez et al. (1991) and Burkheimer et al. (1989) suggest that, contrary to Krashen's belief, "the threshold theory may work in reverse of Cummins's hypothesis. It seems more likely that a threshold in the second language, not the native language, needs to be passed before the second language instruction is consistently superior to native language instruction" (p. 65). The research of Rossell and Baker lead them to favor structured immersion, with rapid transition into regular classes. They point out that there is no evidence that language skills in the mother tongue are relevant to developing literacy in English.

The educational policies now in place, including Chapter 71A, assume that TBE produces greater English language achievement and content area mastery than simply doing nothing, but the research does not support this view. TBE does improve students' facility with Spanish, but as Rossell and Baker point out, this "is not the goal of government policy nor the stated objective of court decisions that have supported TBE" (p. 52).

The issue of the effectiveness of TBE has been muddled by the multiplicity of treatments categorized as bilingual education. As part of their research, Rossell and Baker observed more than 75 classrooms at all grade levels in nine language groups. In addition, they talked with TBE and ESL teachers, program directors, administrators, and state department employees, and they analyzed the results of a survey of the 51 TBE school districts conducted by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education in the spring of 1993. Their aim was to identify factors that seem to determine how closely each program followed the model mandated by state legislation. They found considerable variation

among the different language groups with regard to political pressure applied by activists to use native language instruction, the availability of teachers and materials, and size, which affects districts' ability to fill a classroom with children who speak the same language.

Their conclusion is that the "actual implementation of transitional bilingual education is...far afield from the theory, from the law, and from the regulations" (p. 101). What they observed is that "only Spanish speakers receive native tongue instruction, and even they do not always receive it to the extent that the law and the theory demand" (p. 102). Teachers in programs for Hispanics were more likely to believe in the value of native language instruction, either because they had been taught the facilitation theory in graduate school, because of their desire to adhere to guidelines provided by administrators, or because to do so was a matter of cultural pride. The non-Spanish TBE teachers taught completely in English. Many were aware that they were breaking the law, but they tended to feel that their job was to teach the children as much English as possible so that they would be able to transfer successfully into regular classes, and believed that the best way to do this was by teaching them exclusively in English. Many of these teachers—even those who were native speakers of Japanese, Vietnamese, or other languages other than Spanish—expressed no desire to teach in the mother tongue. They felt that their job was to help their students become fluent in English, not to maintain the first language. Typically, there were few materials in the mother tongue available in their classrooms.

These observations have led Rossell and Baker to the conclusion that the theory and the law are simply unrealistic, given the fiscal and pedagogical constraints on the educational system. Even if there were enough bilingual teachers of students in all the language groups represented in the program, taxpayers would be unlikely to support funding for the creation of textbooks and other teaching materials in little-spoken dialects or in languages that, until one was invented for the purposes of bilingual education, had no written form. More important, many teachers are themselves opposed to teaching in the native language. In the case of languages that do not use the Roman alphabet, it would take years to develop literacy in the first language, and teachers feel that this time would be better spent developing the children's skills in English.

Two other issues considered by Rossell and Baker are the identification of children as eligible for the program and the assessment of the progress of LEP students. The law, the authors contend, has avoided the issue. Children with the "inability to speak English" are supposed to be offered programs that will allow them "to achieve competence in the English language," but the mean-

ings of these phrases are never clarified. When children register for school, a home language survey is administered in writing or through interviews. The survey asks for information on the language used in the home and by the child with family members and friends. In addition, information is gathered through oral assessments made of the child and tests. Sometimes teachers, counselors or parents make referrals.

Rossell and Baker found all these instruments to be highly fallible. Typically, home language surveys ask if *someone* in the home speaks a foreign language. Even if a grandmother or some other person speaks a language other than English, the child is classified as potentially LEP. That is, the interpretation of these surveys focuses on language use in the home rather than the child's knowledge of English. The result is a tendency to over-identify students as LEP.

Standardized achievement tests display the same bias. As explained earlier, these tests are scored on a bell curve; that is, they are designed so that 35 percent of those taking the test will score at or below the 35th percentile. Therefore, some students will always score at or below the cut-off mark, whether or not they know English. The reasons for a low score may be socio-economic, low intelligence, difficulties in taking tests, nervousness, and so on. Lack of English skills is not the only explanation.

Rossell and Baker found language proficiency tests to be equally unreliable. These tests share with standardized achievement tests two flaws:

1. They do not differentiate students who are English-deficient from those who are generally lacking in academic potential;
2. They use arbitrary cut-off scores.

Furthermore, these tests are difficult to interpret not only because there is no agreement on what constitutes language proficiency, but also because different proficiency tests produce markedly different results.

The imperfections in the selection methods make possible the frequent misclassification of students as LEP. That is, Hispanic students who are fluent English-speakers but score low on achievement and proficiency tests will be placed in Spanish-language classes even though their poor performance is not language related. Although there was insufficient data to determine how often misclassification occurs in Massachusetts, Rossell and Baker did examine data from other areas. A study of Title VII projects done in Texas showed that 53 percent of the children in LEP classes were actually English-dominant.

In one study done in California, only half the Hispanic students identified as LEP were more fluent in Spanish than English, and in another, 40 percent of the Hispanic children classified as LEP spoke no Spanish at all. These same kinds of tests are used to determine when students are ready to exit TBE programs; because of the bias inherent in the procedures, many students are never able to exit at all. In fact, some studies show that there is even greater misclassification with the exit testing than with the original placement process. Rossell and Baker found that teacher judgment was a far more accurate indication of whether or not a student would succeed in regular classes than the various surveys and testing programs currently in use. They recommend that the specific limitations of tests be explicitly recognized, or that the tests be eliminated altogether.

One of the main objections to bilingual education is its price tag. Rossell and Baker have done a careful analysis of the cost of various types of programs. According to their findings, the evidence suggests that TBE is more expensive than other self-contained classroom programs such as structured immersion because TBE requires materials in both the students' native language and English, and by law requires smaller classes. Furthermore, TBE requires a separate staff and administrative support, which increases the overall costs of running the school system's bureaucracy. However, TBE may be less expensive than pull-out programs that require two sets of teachers. So far, no completely accurate analysis has been done of all the costs involved in special LEP programs at the state and federal levels. Among the expenses that must be considered are the salaries of classroom aides, fringe benefits for employees, administrative costs, the purchase of books in languages other than English for school libraries, transportation if students must be bused to schools not in their neighborhoods, and the reduced class size for TBE mandated by law. Based on the data currently available, Rossell and Baker conclude that all the programs that fall under the heading "bilingual education" cost between $200 and $1,000 per pupil more than regular education. Although a pull-out program frequently costs less than a self-contained TBE classroom, the cost difference depends on a number of factors, including class size and the use of aides.

With respect to public opinion on bilingual education, Rossell and Baker come to very different conclusions than Krashen. While Krashen insists that survey questions asking whether or not parents support native language teaching at the expense of English are not fair, Rossell and Baker contend that these are the *only* types of fair question. Parents must be told that there is a trade-off, they argue. More hours spent on native-language instruction mean fewer hours spent on English and on other school subjects. Studying Spanish will *not* fa-

cilitate learning English; what *will* facilitate English acquisition is more hours spent on task.

In order to conduct an investigation of parents' attitudes toward bilingual education, Rossell and Baker were going to conduct telephone interviews of LEP students who were enrolled in schools in Massachusetts. However, META (Multicultural Education, Training and Advocacy, Inc.), an Hispanic advocacy group, threatened legal action against any school district that cooperated with the survey. Since they were unable to conduct their own poll, Rossell and Baker analyzed surveys conducted by a number of other researchers. They found, as Krashen did, that support for bilingual education (with mandated native-language instruction) varies enormously—from 80 to 1 percent—depending on how the question is asked. Furthermore, they found inconsistencies in parents' responses. For example, in one survey of Mexican-American parents, 70 percent said they wanted their children to become literate in both Spanish and English. However, only 12 percent wanted the schools to teach Spanish if this meant less time for English, and no more than 22 percent were willing to reduce the time spent teaching art or music. Rossell and Baker show that surveys that do not ask the trade-off question overestimate support for bilingual education; while most parents say they favor bilingual education, "when the trade-off question is asked support plummets about 60 points" (p. 163).

Over all, Rossell and Baker found that "bilingual education and native-language instruction are of low salience for adults in general and for language minority parents" (p. 182). When asked to rank the three most important subjects they wanted their children to study at school, only between 4 and 10 percent named the mother tongue, and almost no one mentioned ethnic heritage. Furthermore, nearly 98 percent of the parents of LEP children thought that learning English was very important, and fewer than half, including Mexican-American parents, thought that it was the school's responsibility to teach literacy in the native language. When parents understand that teaching literacy in the first tongue means less time for English, math, or other subjects, including music or art, they show little support for bilingual education. Clearly, mandated native-language instruction conflicts with the goals and desires of the parents of LEP children.

Unlike Krashen, who resorts to disparaging opponents of programs he supports, these researchers attribute the best intentions to those who champion TBE. They dismiss categorically allegations that most bilingual teachers and administrators support TBE because their jobs depend on it. Instead, they describe TBE staff members as competent professionals who believe that what

they are doing benefits their students. Rossell and Baker argue that if the advantages of bilingual education have been greatly exaggerated, so has the harm caused by TBE programs. Their research shows that in Massachusetts, at least, most students in native-language instruction do eventually learn English, and if they do not, it is usually because they have learning problems that retard their progress.

That said, Rossell and Baker argue that native-language instruction is *not* a superior technique, and that Massachusetts is unjustified in requiring it. To do so is not only fiscally but also educationally irresponsible, for "whatever benefit there is from being literate in one's native language is offset by the time it takes to acquire that literacy if that is not one's ultimate goal" (p. 187). Indeed, Rossell and Baker imply that Cummins's facilitation theory was little more than a justification for a policy that had been implemented a decade earlier on civil rights grounds. They not only find no evidence that teaching children in their native languages produces better results than other methods, but allege that if one can draw any conclusion at all from the research that exists, it is that native language instruction is at least marginally detrimental to LEP students' overall education and acquisition of English because of the time it takes away from the development of English skills. They point out that since the enactment of the Transitional Bilingual Education Act in 1971, the high school completion rates of Hispanics have fallen relative to other groups, and, in general, bilingual education has not fulfilled the expectations of its supporters.

According to their research, structured immersion is almost always superior to TBE. Like TBE, structured immersion provides a protected environment in a self-contained classroom, but allows children to be taught entirely in English. Rossell and Baker suggest that TBE may be more effective than all-English instruction at the very beginning, when students know no English at all, but as their knowledge of the language increases, time on task in English becomes more beneficial. Several studies show that children in structured immersion classes are able to transfer to regular classes more quickly than those in native language classes.

Rossell and Baker conclude that the Massachusetts statute requiring a full-time TBE program when there are only twenty LEP students of a single language group in a district is totally unrealistic and should be changed. Furthermore, children should stay in bilingual education classes a much shorter time: "It is probably a matter of months before a child can benefit from a regular English classroom" (p. 193). Last of all, policy makers should lower the heat on the bilingual debate and consider the data.

Rossell and Baker end their book with six concrete policy recommendations for changes in the Massachusetts TBE program:

1. Free school districts from the legal obligation to provide native language instruction.
2. Increase the LEP population size needed to trigger a self-contained classroom from 20 in a single language group per *district* to 18 per *school* in a particular *grade.*
3. Require parental consent *before* enrolling children in a self-contained classroom instead of requiring parents to take the initiative to withdraw their children *after* enrollment has been completed.
4. Require English language fluency for teachers in an educational program for LEP children.
5. Change the criteria for entering and exiting a self-contained classroom, making teachers' evaluations, not standardized tests, the decisive factor.
6. Keep class sizes or adult-child ratio small either by reducing the number of students or increasing the number of aides.

In their description of an ideal program for LEP students, Rossell and Baker affirm that the best, most cost-effective method is structured immersion. However, they contend, even if the language of instruction is English, in most cases students should not remain in self-contained, second-language acquisition classrooms for more than a year. Students with particular learning problems other than faulty, non-native English should be identified and moved into appropriate programs that meet their specific needs.

Rossell and Baker contend that much more research must be done in the field of teaching and evaluating LEP students. Indeed, they say that the quality of research in this area is a "national disgrace" (p. 202). However, based on the data that is available, they make the following observations about TBE:

1. Native language instruction should be minimal and used only with students who know no or very little English.
2. In most cases, children can move into all-English classrooms (structured immersion or pullout programs) in a matter of months.
3. Teachers who are familiar with, but not fluent in, the child's native language are better teachers of LEP students than fluent speakers, who often teach too much and too long in the mother tongue to the detriment of English.

With regard to structured immersion they point out that enrollment in self-contained classrooms should last no longer than a year, that students who speak the same language should not be grouped together, and that teachers should not instruct the children in their native language. Although most parents do not put native language maintenance at the top of their list of priorities, Rossell and Baker suggest that in regions in which there is a demand for it, mother tongue instruction could be offered after school as a voluntary enrichment program. This, the researchers point out, is the only kind of native language instruction that the majority of parents of LEP children say that they want.

Rossell and Baker conclude that although many academics argue that bilingual education often fails because teachers do not implement it according to the theory, the opposite is actually true. The theory—that children must be literate in their native language before making the transition to English—is unsubstantiated and invalid. It is the teachers who subvert the system by teaching entirely in English that prevent TBE from becoming "a total disaster" (p. 206). Parents, they believe, must be told of the risks inherent in TBE as mandated by Chapter 71A, and the regulations should be changed. Otherwise, the same situation may arise in Massachusetts as has arisen in Los Angeles, where parents boycotted the Ninth Street school, and New York, where Hispanic parents brought suit against the school district for failing to teach their children English.

CONCLUSIONS

Under Attack and *Bilingual Education in Massachusetts* represent pedagogical philosophies that are diametrically opposed to one another. Krashen starts from the premise that native language instruction is beneficial and desirable and seeks data to bolster his opinion. Even when the research is inconclusive or counters his hypothesis, he maintains his stance, explaining away problematical data. Although Krashen is undoubtedly sincere, much of the theory and research he cites date back to the heyday of the civil rights movement, when policy makers viewed bilingual education as a means of dealing with educational inequities. In view of more recent studies indicating that bilingual education, with its hefty native language component, fails to mainstream LEP children quickly and improve graduation rates and academic achievement for Hispanics, the facilitation theory on which he bases his arguments must be reexamined. However, Krashen seems unwilling to budge from his position or to even consider objective data that is unsupportive. Since he views mother tongue instruction as an unmitigated good, he defends keeping LEP children in native language classrooms as long as possible, even after they

have learned English, and favors maintenance programs that most parents say they do not want. Clearly, given Krashen's inflexibility, no compromise is possible between his position and that of Rossell and Baker.

Unlike Krashen, Rossell and Baker do not start from any premise other than the one stated by the law and supported by bilingual advocates: that the object of TBE is to teach LEP students English. In order to determine whether or not TBE is working in Massachusetts, they analyze huge quantities of data, pointing out flaws in the research methodology of some studies, whether or not these studies support TBE. They also point out inconsistencies in the results of the surveys they analyze and do not attempt simply to explain them away. At 242 pages, their book is a far more substantial study than *Under Attack.* Based on their research, Rossell and Baker expose defects in the facilitation theory and come to conclusions that are radically different from Krashen's. Still, the authors do not take an inflexible stance with regard to TBE. They do not argue to eliminate native language instruction completely, but contend that it is most effective when used at the very beginning of the program, with students whose knowledge of English is nil. At no time do they deprecate those who support the opposite view. Finally, they make concrete recommendations for the improvement of programs for LEP children.

Bilingual Education in Massachusetts: The Emperor Has No Clothes is a model study of bilingual education as it is practiced not only in Massachusetts but elsewhere. We can only hope that politicians and educators will read it with an open mind and take the authors' findings to heart.

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How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education[1]

Georges Vernez and Allan Abrahamse
with Denise Quigley

Summary

A growing number of immigrant children and youths have entered the country over the past twenty-five years. In 1990, there were more than 2.3 million immigrant children and youths in U.S. schools and colleges—about 5 percent of all students.

Many of these children have to overcome poor academic preparation in their country of origin and nearly all have to learn English and new institutional and cultural customs and norms. As a result, there are growing concerns about how these children are performing in U.S. schools and postsecondary institutions and in turn about the new set of demands they are placing upon these institutions. These concerns are exacerbated by the increasing diversity of languages and cultures that these students bring with them and their high concentration in a few areas of the country. About 75 percent of these children are concentrated in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. California's educational institutions alone are currently educating more than two out of five of the country's immigrant children and youths.

This study is the first effort to systematically describe and analyze the experience and performance of immigrant children and youths in the U.S. educational system. Two companion studies have explored the new demands these children and youths are placing on U.S. primary and secondary schools and on colleges, respectively, and how those institutions are responding to these demands.[2]

Methods and Limitations

We used data from "High School and Beyond" (HSB), a national representative sample of more than 21,000 10th and 12th graders first interviewed in 1980 and followed over a six-year period through their high school years, gradua-

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tion, and postsecondary education in U.S. colleges. These data were complemented with data from the 1970, 1980, and 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing to analyze participation in U.S. education across all age groups and over time.

Throughout this study we compare the participation and performance of immigrant children and youths in U.S. educational institutions to that of their native counterparts overall and within each of the four major racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Hispanic, and white.

The HSB data have two major limitations. First, they provide information on immigrant students and natives who began their education before 1980. The number of immigrant children in the nation's schools has doubled since then, and schools' and colleges' ability to absorb them has arguably deteriorated. Hence, today's immigrants may perform differently from those of fifteen years or so ago. Second, HSB findings are restricted to immigrants who were in a U.S. school by the 10th grade. Immigrant youths who entered the U.S. education system after that grade are not included.

Experience in Primary and Secondary Education

Immigrant children and youths are as likely as natives to enroll in U.S. primary and middle schools. However, they are somewhat less likely than natives to attend high school: In 1990, participation rates were 87 percent and 93 percent, respectively. All of this differential is accounted for by immigrant youths of Hispanic origin, primarily from Mexico. In 1990, one of every four immigrants from Mexico in the 15–17 age group was not in school—a rate nearly 20 percent lower than that for any other immigrant group and 17 percent lower than that for natives of Mexican origin.

We present evidence suggesting that the relatively low in-school participation rates of Mexican immigrants of high school age is primarily due to their not "dropping in" to the school system in the first place rather than their "dropping out" of school. By age fifteen, Mexican immigrants have already been out of school in Mexico for two years on average. They do not enroll in U.S. schools either by choice, because of inability to catch up with others their age or their native counterparts, or by economic necessity because they must support themselves and their families.

Conditional on having been enrolled in a U.S. high school by grade 10, immigrant students are more likely than their native counterparts to make choices consistent with eventually pursuing a college education. They are more likely to follow an academic track and take advanced courses in math

and sciences. These differences in course-taking patterns hold not only in the aggregate but also within each racial/ethnic group. However, there are variations among immigrants of different racial/ethnic groups just as there are such variations among natives. Asian immigrants generally performed best on indicators of preparation for college, followed by white and black immigrants. Hispanic immigrants performed the lowest on nearly all indicators of college preparation.

Immigrants in U.S. high schools are also more likely to plan to go to college and to report working hard to achieve their expectations. Similarly, the immigrant parents of immigrant children report higher educational expectations for their children than do native parents.

Immigrant children and parents of all racial/ethnic groups studied have higher educational aspirations than their native counterparts. However, this difference in aspirations is three times greater between immigrants and natives of Hispanic origin than it is between immigrants and natives in other groups. This significant decline in the educational aspirations of Hispanics in the United States has also recently been noted by other researchers. Its causes, however, have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

High School Graduation and College Attendance

Whatever difficulties immigrant children and youths might face adjusting to the language, institutional, and cultural norms of this country, their educational attainment has equaled, if not exceeded, that of native children and youths. Immigrant high school sophomores were just as likely as natives to graduate from high school within four years from their sophomore year—with Asians more likely to graduate than whites, blacks, and Hispanics, in that order.

Immigrant high school graduates were also more likely than their native counterparts to enroll in postsecondary education, attend college, and stay continuously through four years of college. Immigrants' higher rates of participation in higher education hold within each racial/ethnic group. But there are differences between immigrants of different racial/ethnic groups that mirror the well-known differences between natives of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Asian immigrants and natives scored generally the highest on all indicators of college-going and Hispanic immigrants and natives scored consistently the lowest on indicators of college-going with whites and blacks in between. The differences are large. Four of every five Asian high school graduates go on to college, compared to one of every two Hispanic high school graduates.

In multivariate analyses, we found that the individual and family factors associated with college-going were generally the same for immigrants and natives as well as across racial/ethnic groups. High school graduates whose parents have higher income, higher levels of education, and higher educational expectations for their children are more likely to pursue a college education than others. This confirms the importance of family background and family attitudes toward education in determining children's eventual educational attainment. Also, a student's positive attitude toward working hard in school was found to be positively associated with college-going for all groups. All else being equal, immigration status per se was not found to be associated with college-going.

The fact that Hispanics have lower scores than Asians, whites, and blacks on nearly all key family and individual characteristics—income, parental education, and educational aspirations—helps explain their lower educational attainment.

Policy Implications

Our findings suggest that there is no need to develop policies targeted *uniquely* on immigrants. This does not mean, however, that the increasing number of immigrants in U.S. schools does not place new and unique demands upon the educational institutions serving them. Two companion studies (McDonnell and Hill, 1993; Gray and Rolph, 1996) have documented the difficulties that schools and colleges are having meeting the special language and social support needs of immigrants and the resource strains they place on schools' overall operations. The growing presence of immigrants in U.S. educational institutions also raises fundamental questions regarding graduation requirements, most particularly with regard to English proficiency, equity in the allocation of financial aid, and the definition of "disadvantaged" and "underrepresented" students in the face of increased diversity. Until now, these questions have been either ignored or addressed ad hoc, leading to inconsistencies within and across institutions. They should now be addressed.

Beyond that, the continuing large discrepancy in educational attainment between Hispanics and other racial/ethnic groups should be cause for concern. After twenty-five years of continuous and growing immigration, Hispanics are rapidly becoming the largest minority in the United States. Already one out of three high school students in California is of Hispanic origin and this proportion will continue to grow in years to come regardless of whether or not there is continuing immigration. It is not going too far to suggest that the educational attainment Hispanics eventually reach will in large measure deter-

mine the quality of the future labor force and the demand for public services in key states of the country.

Enhancing the educational achievements of Hispanics—and other similarly situated students—will require policies that go beyond the classroom. Income assistance and financial assistance can alleviate the income gap between Hispanics and those of other groups. But public funding for these programs is being reduced and at the same time college tuition and fees are going up rapidly. Also, low levels of parental education and low educational expectation of parents and students may not be easily amenable to change. Programs directed at increasing parental involvement in the education of their children and adult education programs including English language instruction, high school equivalency classes, vocational education, and workshops on effective parenting are steps in the right direction. But demand for these programs far exceeds supply.

We also need to understand why the educational expectations of parents and students are declining across generations of immigrants, most particularly Hispanics. This understanding is necessary if strategies are to be developed to effectively address this problem.

Finally, strategies need to be developed to encourage Hispanic immigrant youths aged 14 to 17 to pursue their education in this country. Failure to do so will result in hundreds of thousands of youths without a high school diploma with no prospects for economic mobility over their lifetime.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The United States is closing the twentieth century the way it began: with a substantial level of immigration that is hastening population growth and reshaping the U.S. ethnic composition. The number of foreign-born people residing in the country has more than quadrupled since Congress liberalized immigration policy in 1965, reaching 22 million in 1994. By 1994, 8.5 percent of the U.S. population was foreign-born, up from 5 percent in 1965.[3] Currently, nearly one million additional persons immigrate every year, accounting for more than 40 percent of the nation's yearly population growth. Whereas yesterday's immigrants came predominantly from Europe, today's immigrants come from all parts of the world, with Asians and Hispanics accounting for more than 80 percent.

Earlier waves of immigrants tended to concentrate on the East Coast, most particularly in New York. Today's immigrants tend to concentrate on the West

Coast, most particularly in California, where nearly two out of every five new immigrants settle. The large metropolitan areas of Florida, Illinois, and Texas also harbor a large concentration of new immigrants. Like their predecessors, today's immigrants are predominantly young, with a majority having received little schooling in their native countries, and many having suffered the traumas of economic deprivation, war, or both.

Although most immigrants enter the country as adults, a sizable proportion enter when they are still of school age. In 1990, more than two million immigrants, 11 percent of the total foreign-born population, were age 17 or below. Many of these children enter U.S. schools and some have to overcome poor academic preparation in their own country. And nearly all of them have to learn English and new institutional and cultural customs and norms. Numerous anecdotal accounts tell of the difficulties these children and youths encounter adjusting to and finding their place in U.S. schools and postsecondary institutions. In turn, concerns have been raised that immigrants in U.S. schools and colleges, with their perceived unique needs, are not given the attention they may require, thereby affecting their educational opportunities as well as their opportunities for eventual success in the U.S. labor market. Since immigrants constitute more than one-fourth of the growth of the national labor force, their preparation for work is of importance for the future of the U.S. economy. At the same time, those who are closest to immigrants in school—the teachers, professors, and administrators in our educational institutions—often describe these youths as highly motivated and eager to integrate successfully into school as well as into the broader American society.

This study is the first comprehensive effort to describe and analyze the experience of immigrant children and youths from all parts of the world in the U.S. education system. It examines the extent to which immigrants of school age actually enroll in U.S. schools and how they fare in this system from middle school, to high school, and eventually to college.

CHAPTER THREE

Participation of Immigrant Children in K–12

Immigrant children may enter the United States at any age. Some enter with their parents while they are still of preschool age and hence have all of their schooling in this country. But most come to the United States after having had some schooling in their country of origin and they may or may not pursue their education in a U.S. school. We might expect that the younger an immigrant is at entry the more likely she/he is to go to school here. But older children, e.g., those 16 or above, may bypass schooling in the United States

Table 3.1
In-School Participation Rates, by Age and Immigration Status, 1980 to 1990

	1980		1990	
Age	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
United States				
5–7	79	79	74	71
8–11	99	97	96	94
12–14	99	97	97	94
15–17	92	84	93	87
California				
5–7	93	89	86	81
8–11	99	97	96	92
12–14	99	97	97	94
15–17	92	80	94	84

Source: 1980 and 1990 Public Use Sample of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

altogether, most particularly if they had already left school in their home country or if they are required to work to maintain themselves and their families. These issues are explored in this chapter.[4]

Primary to Middle School

Up to the level of middle school, immigrants are nearly as likely to be enrolled in school as natives in the same age groups. Table 3.1 indicates that in 1990, 94 percent of immigrants in the age 8–11 and age 12–14 groups nationwide were in school compared to 96 percent for natives.[5] In the earlier age 4–7 group, the proportion of children in school is lower for both groups: 74 and 71 percent, respectively. The pattern is similar in California, although the differential between immigrants and natives is slightly larger: three percentage points lower compared to two, nationwide.

Over time, school enrollment rates have declined for both immigrants and natives, although the decline has been slightly larger for the first group. For instance, for the age 8–11 group, participation declined by 3 percent from 99 percent in 1980 for natives and also by 3 percent from 97 percent for immigrants. This decline may be partially explained by an increase in the number of parents teaching their children at home. However, whether this reason also applies to immigrants is unknown.

High School

Immigrants of high school age (15–17) were significantly less likely to be in school than were natives both in 1980 and in 1990. In the latter year, 87 percent of immigrants were in school compared to 93 percent of natives. In California, the differential is even larger: 84 percent compared to 94 percent. Contrary to the pattern noted above for earlier ages, in-school participation of both immigrants and natives has increased between 1980 and 1990. The increase was somewhat larger for immigrants than for natives. These increases are consistent with the outreach efforts made throughout the 1980s to reduce early-drop-out rates.

Nearly all the differential in high school participation rates between immigrants and natives is accounted for by immigrants from Mexico. Table 3.2 shows that in-school participation rates for Asian, black, and white immigrants and natives were similar both in 1980 and in 1990 and both nationwide and in California. Not so for Hispanics. Although, native Hispanic participation rates were only slightly lower than for native Asians and whites and similar to blacks, they were much lower for Hispanic immigrants, most specifically immigrants from Mexico. In 1990 as in 1980, one in four immigrants from Mexico in the 15–17 age group was not in school. In 1990, their in-school rate was nearly 20 percent lower than that of any other immigrant group and 17 percent lower than for natives of Mexican origin.

Such large disparities for just one group of immigrants raise the question of whether these youths are drop-outs from U.S. schools or instead are youths who never entered the U.S. school system in the first place. Whether the first or the second explanation prevails is critical for two reasons. First, the number of such youths is relatively large at any one point in time: 37,000 nationwide and 25,000 in California. Over time, the number of such youths becoming adults lacking a high school education will amount to hundreds of thousands.

And their prospects for success in the U.S. labor market are low (Schoeni, McCarthy, and Vernez, 1996). Second, it is critical to determine whether and how to intervene. If these youths are actually drop-outs from U.S. schools, targeted drop-out prevention programs might help address this problem. But if these youths never "drop in," efforts would need to be directed at overcoming barriers that prevent them from enrolling in school in the first place.

We suspect that the primary reason for low in-school participation rates among Mexican immigrant youths of high school age is that they do not enter the U.S. school system in the first place. On the average, Mexican immigrants have completed seven years of schooling. By the age of fifteen, the average Mexican has been out of school for two years. It should not be surprising, then, that

Table 3.2
In-School Participation Rates of High School Youths, Age 15–17, by Immigration Status and Race/Ethnicity, 1990

	United States		California	
Race/Ethnicity	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
Asian	95	94	96	95
Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino	96	95	97	95
Other Asian	95	94	95	95
Blacks	91	91	91	93
Hispanic	91	83	93	77
Mexican	91	74	93	74
Other Hispanic	90	88	94	88
White	93	92	95	94

Source: 1990 Public Use Sample of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

a substantial proportion of Mexican youths who may enter the United States as immigrants at age fifteen or above may simply choose not to enter schools here either by choice, because of inability to catch up with others their age or their native and other immigrant counterparts who have benefited from uninterrupted schooling either here or abroad, or by economic necessity because they must support themselves and their families.

There is some evidence in the literature in support of the hypothesis that some children never "drop in." In their case studies of six school districts and 49 schools within those districts, McDonnell and Hill (1993) write that:

> educators in all the districts we studied reported that schools have great difficulty reaching and holding older students who enter school several years behind. They experience school as a struggle to catch up with courses that are continually moving faster than they can. Students who come from poor areas of their source countries often come from families that expect young people to abandon school in their teens to begin work and marriage. Many see the wages available even in dead-end U.S. jobs as being highly attractive, and some must take any available work to support their brothers and sisters. (pp. 72–73)

Further evidence that many immigrant youths never "drop in" is provided in Table 3.3. It shows 1990s' in-school participation rates separately for three ages: 15, 16, and 17. Participation rates are high and about the same for 15- and 16-

Table 3.3
In-School Participation Rates of High School Age Youths, by Age and Immigration Status, Nationwide, 1990

	Native			Immigrant		
Race/Ethnicity	**15**	**16**	**17**	**15**	**16**	**17**
United States						
Asian						
Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino	97	96	95	96	96	94
Other Asian	98	96	86	97	95	94
Black	94	92	86	96	94	84
Hispanic						
Mexican	95	91	85	85	79	62
Other Hispanic	95	91	86	92	89	82
White	96	94	90	96	94	87
All	96	93	89	92	89	79
California						
Asian						
Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino	96	97	97	98	95	93
Other Asian	98	94	92	96	95	95
Black	94	92	88	95	95	91
Hispanic						
Mexican	95	94	88	85	77	62
Other Hispanic	96	96	89	92	89	82
White	96	95	92	96	94	92
All	96	95	91	91	86	77

Source: 1990 Public Use Sample of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

year-olds and exhibit a modest decline for 17-year-olds for all immigrants of all racial/ethnic groups with the marked exception of Hispanics, and most especially Mexican immigrants. For the latter, the in-school rate is already low at age 15 and decreases disproportionately (relative to other immigrants) at age 16. By age 17, fewer than two in three Mexican immigrants were in school in 1990—a rate that is more than 25 percent lower than for white, Asian, and black immigrants.

The pattern among natives differs significantly from that of immigrants. Natives of Hispanic origin have similar participation rates to Asians, blacks, and

whites up to age 16. However, they as well as black natives experience a somewhat larger decline in in-school participation at age 17 than Asians and whites.

CHAPTER FOUR

Immigrant Youths in High School: Better Prepared for College

How do immigrants who actually enroll in U.S. high schools actually perform? In this chapter, we address this question using data from "High School and Beyond."[6] Our focus is on those activities that are preparatory and/or consistent with eventually pursuing a college education. The college preparation of immigrants in high school is compared across racial/ethnic groups and to natives.

College preparation of high school students has many dimensions: academic, extracurricular, and motivational. Data limitations do not allow us to explore exhaustively all of these dimensions. Here we explore three of them: (1) course-taking patterns; (2) the meeting of college-entry requirements; and (3) motivations. Each of these dimensions are measured by several indicators:

- Course-taking patterns:
  — "Academic track"
  — Years of math and English courses
  —Advanced placement courses
- College requirements:
  — SAT or ACT test
  — Graduation from high school
- Attitudes toward education and college aspirations:
  — Likes to work hard in school
  — Interested in school
  — Plans to go to college
  — Some college is least amount of schooling would be satisfied with
  — Would be disappointed if did not graduate from college

Being on an academic track and taking advanced placement courses are important indicators not only of intent but of capabilities of eventually pursuing a postsecondary education. Also, students on an academic track are more than three times as likely to eventually complete a bachelor's degree than students in a "general" or "vocational" track (U.S. Department of Education Statistics, 1993, Table 301). Graduation from high school and taking the SAT (or ACT) are two "gatekeeping" hurdles that must be overcome to eventually pursue a college education. Finally, whether a student plans to go to college, as well as is motivated to do so, has been found to be associated with eventual college-going.

Course-Taking Pattern

Immigrant high school students are more likely than natives to be following an academic track and a course-taking pattern that is conducive to the eventual pursuit of a college education. Table 4.1 shows a course-taking pattern in which a higher percentage of immigrants than native students were enrolled in an academic track, took more than three years of English and math, and took advanced placement courses in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, physics, and chemistry. This pattern is consistent whether we compare natives to immigrants as a whole or whether we compare immigrants and natives across ethnic groups. And it is statistically significant: The probability that it could happen by chance alone is less than 2 percent.

Some of the differences between immigrants and natives are particularly striking. Nearly one in two immigrant students was following an academic track compared to two in five for natives. They were also 34 percent more likely to have taken three years or more of mathematics and more likely to have completed advanced courses in algebra, geometry, and calculus. The magnitude of the differences between immigrants and natives increases with the degree of difficulty of the math course. Whereas immigrants were 24 percent more likely than natives to take Algebra 2, they were 41 percent and 29 percent more likely to take trigonometry and calculus, respectively.

Just as immigrant youths in the nation's high schools were more likely to take advanced math courses, they were also more likely to take advanced science courses. They were 57 percent more likely to have taken an advanced physics course and 28 percent more likely to have taken an advanced chemistry course.

The only exception in this favorable course-taking pattern concerns English. Immigrants were slightly less likely to have taken three years of English courses than natives, but the difference is relatively small.

The relationship between immigrants and natives within ethnic groups is also nearly always in the same direction: Immigrants are always more likely than natives from their same ethnic group to have been on an academic track and to have taken advanced placement courses. The largest relative difference between natives and immigrants is encountered among Hispanics and the smallest among Asians.

However, there are significant variations in course-taking patterns across ethnic groups, holding immigration status constant. Again, Hispanics were the least likely of any racial/ethnic group to be placed on an academic track, to take three years of English or math, or to take advanced courses of any kind.

Table 4.1
Percentage of Students on an Academic Track and Taking Advanced Placement Courses in High School, by Race/Ethnicity and Immigration Status

	Ethnic Groups									
	All		Asian		Black		Hispanic		White	
	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
Academic track	41	47	58	59	37	46	28	40	44	48
Completed courses										
3+ years of English	74	71	79	72	74	73	67	65	76	78
3+ years of math	31	41	46	54	33	42	22	32	32	45
Advanced courses										
Algebra 2	50	63	75	76	42	59	33	53	54	65
Geometry	57	66	78	78	39	57	35	49	62	73
Trigonometry	27	38	48	54	15	30	13	26	31	43
Calculus	9	12	18	25	4	14	5	7	11	14
Physics	21	33	37	49	18	33	15	24	22	35
Chemistry	39	50	57	63	29	58	25	35	42	52

Source: "High School and Beyond."

Note: The probability that a higher proportion of immigrants than natives taking the courses listed could occur by chance alone is less than 2 percent.

The differences were particularly pronounced for native Hispanics: They were 50 percent (or more) less likely to be on an academic track than white and Asian natives, to have taken at least three years of math, or to have taken advanced math. Hispanic immigrants were also less likely to have taken college "gatekeeper" courses than their white and Asian counterparts, but the differences were not as large.

Blacks were somewhat less likely than whites and Asians to have taken college "gatekeeper" courses, but the differences were smaller than for Hispanics, ranging from a 16 percent lower likelihood of being on an academic track to a high 37 percent lower likelihood of having taken advanced geometry.

Meeting College Requirements

Immigrant high school sophomores were no less likely than natives to have graduated from high school within four years from their sophomore year.[7] Table 4.2 shows that 81 percent of immigrant students had graduated compared to 84 percent for natives; this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 4.2 also shows differences in high school graduation rates between immigrants and natives by ethnic groupings. Within these groupings, these differences were generally small and none are significant.

Holding immigration status constant—looking down the columns in Table 4.2—the variations of graduation rates across racial/ethnic groups are similar

Table 4.2
Percentage of 1980 High School Sophomores Who Graduated from High School by Summer 1982, by Immigration Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender

	Native	Immigrant
All	83	81
Ethnicity		
Asian	86	95
Black	79	72
Hispanic	75	70
White and other	85	87

Source: "High School and Beyond."

Note: None of the differences between natives and immigrants shown in this table are statistically significant.

Table 4.3
Percentage of High School Students Taking the ACT or SAT Tests, by Race/Ethnicity and Immigration Status

	All		Asian		Black		Hispanic		White	
	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
Took SAT or ACT	46	46	60	53	37	34	30	38	49	52

Source: "High School and Beyond."

to those noted above for course-taking patterns. Asians and whites were the most likely to graduate from high school whether native or foreign-born. Hispanics were least likely to graduate, with one out of four failing to complete high school within two years of their senior year. These ethnic differences have been well documented in previous research (Koretz, 1990). What our results add to previous findings is that these racial/ethnic differences remain when we separate immigrants from natives. Many colleges, most particularly four-year colleges and universities, also require applicants to take either the SAT or ACT. Here again, immigrant students are just as likely to take these tests as natives, regardless of racial/ethnic grouping (Table 4.3).

Attitudes and Expectations

The information collected in "High School and Beyond" offers an opportunity to compare the attitudes toward education and the college aspirations of high school students and their parents. It clearly shows that immigrant students have more positive views toward schooling and have higher aspirations for a college education than natives (Table 4.4).[8]

Two out of three immigrant youths reported that "they liked working hard in school" compared to one in two natives. Similarly, they were 7 and 12 percent more likely to "plan to go to college" and "to expect to be disappointed should they fail to graduate from college" than their native counterparts, respectively. The probability that the consistent pattern of differences between immigrants and natives exhibited in Table 4.4 could happen by chance alone is less than 2 percent.

The higher educational aspirations of immigrants hold within each racial/ethnic group; the differences are particularly large between Hispanic immi-

Table 4.4
Percentage of High School Seniors with Selected Attitudes toward Postsecondary Education, by Race/Ethnicity and Immigration Status

	All		Asian		Black		Hispanic		White	
	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
Attitudes toward education										
Likes to work hard in school	52	62	63	66	69	70	53	68	50	56
Interested in school	74	78	83	77	85	79	74	86	73	74
College aspirations										
Plans to go to college	66	73	83	84	67	66	67	72	67	72
Some college is least amount of schooling would be satisfied with	48	57	43	50	43	60	47	71	50	54
Would be disappointed if not college graduate	56	68	72	78	61	61	45	74	57	64

Source: "High School and Beyond."

Note: The probability that the pattern of differences between immigrants and natives shown in this table could have occurred by chance alone is less than 2 percent.

Table 4.5
Percentage of High School Seniors Whose Parents Have Selected Expectations

	All		Asian		Black		Hispanic		White	
	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant	Native	Immigrant
College is father's after-high-school plan for respondent	53	62	73	79	44	52	37	49	56	68
Mother wants respondent to go to college	60	70	80	84	60	66	45	64	62	72

Source: "High School and Beyond."

grants and Hispanic natives. The first were 29 percent more likely than the second to report positive attitudes and high expectations for postsecondary education. Where educational expectations and "working hard" to fulfill them are concerned, Hispanic immigrants are generally similar to immigrants from other ethnic groups. These relative aspirations, however, are not maintained among Hispanic natives, who have the lowest ratings on indicators of college aspirations.

The immigrant parents of immigrant children also hold higher college expectations for their children than native parents, mirroring those of their children. Table 4.5 shows that immigrant parents are more likely to plan for and want their children to go to college after high school. For instance, 71 percent of immigrant mothers want their children to go to college compared to 60 percent for native mothers. This pattern holds for fathers as well and across racial/ethnic groupings. As in all other aspects of preparation for college considered in this chapter, Hispanic native-born parents have the lowest aspirations of any group.[9]

Conclusions

Academic and motivational preparation for college begins early in primary and secondary school and is particularly important at the high school level. We found that in key aspects of preparation for college, immigrants were more likely to make choices consistent with eventual college-going than their native counterparts, regardless of race or ethnicity. They were more likely to follow an academic track, take advanced courses in math and science, take the SAT or ACT, and plan to go to college and work hard to achieve their expectations.

There are variations among immigrants of different ethnic groups just as there are variations among natives of different ethnic groups. Asian immigrants generally performed better on indicators of preparation for college, followed by white and black immigrants. Hispanic immigrants performed the lowest on nearly all indicators of college preparation except motivation and expectations. This pattern among immigrants of different ethnicity is similar to the pattern encountered among natives of different ethnic groups. Native Hispanics score the lowest of any group on indicators of college aspirations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The number of immigrant children and youths in American schools, colleges, and universities has increased rapidly over the past twenty years and is expected to continue to increase in years to come. Combined with the children

of immigrants born in the United States, they are rapidly changing the racial/ethnic composition of the student body, most particularly in those states where immigrants concentrate, such as California, New York, and Florida. Already today, the majority of students in California's high schools are of Hispanic and Asian origin.

These rapid changes in the composition of the student body have raised questions about the ability of educational institutions to respond effectively to the unique needs of these "new" populations, and in turn about the educational performance of immigrants in American institutions. This concern stems from the fact that immigrant children and the children of immigrants provide a growing share of new entries in the labor force and hence are of increasing importance to the nation's economic future.

This study is the first to systematically focus on the attainment of immigrant children and youths in American schools. Our main findings and their policy implications are summarized below:

1. *Immigrant students and their parents hold more positive attitudes toward schooling and have higher expectations for a college education than native students and their parents.*

Immigrant children and parents of all racial/ethnic groups studied have higher educational aspirations than their native counterparts. However, the difference in aspirations is three times greater between immigrants and natives of Hispanic origin than it is between immigrants and natives of other groups. Where educational aspirations and working hard to fulfill them are concerned, Hispanic immigrants are generally similar to immigrants of other racial/ethnic origins. These relative aspirations, however, are not maintained among Hispanic natives and their parents, who have the lowest ratings on indicators of college aspirations. These findings, based on a national sample, are similar to recent findings based on a study of children in San Diego schools (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Because we found a significant relationship between attitudes and aspirations toward education of both students and parents on eventual educational attainment, the reasons for this significant decline of educational aspirations encountered among Hispanic youths and their parents should be thoroughly researched.

2. *All else being equal, the higher educational aspirations of immigrants translate into higher rates of college-going for them than for natives.*

Whatever difficulties immigrant children and youths might face adjusting to the language and institutional and cultural norms of this country, their educational attainment equals or exceeds that of native children and youths. We found that holding income, education of parents, and other individual and family factors constant, immigrants were more likely to go to college, not so much because they are immigrants, per se, but because they hold higher educational aspirations. In U.S. high schools, immigrants were also more likely to have been placed on an academic track, to have taken advanced courses in math and sciences, and to have taken the ACT or SAT tests.

Although these findings do not support the need to develop policies targeted uniquely on immigrants, they do mean that the increasing number of immigrants in U.S. schools raises new and unique demands for U.S. educational institutions. Two companion RAND studies—one focusing on responses of primary and secondary schools (McDonnell and Hill, 1993) and the other on responses of postsecondary educational institutions to immigration (Gray and Rolph, 1996)—have documented the current difficulties that schools and colleges are having meeting the special language and social support needs of immigrants and how they are straining their administrative functions and operations. In postsecondary institutions, the growing presence of immigrants also raises fundamental questions regarding graduating requirements (most particularly with respect to proficiency in the English language), equity in the allocation of financial assistance between immigrants and natives, and the definition of "disadvantaged and underrepresented" students in the face of increased diversity. Furthermore, immigration has given rise to new issues that public policy needs to address, as we identify below.

3. *The largest discrepancies in educational attainment are to be found between racial/ethnic groups regardless of immigration status. It is these discrepancies that will present the greatest public policy challenge in years to come.*

It is well documented that the educational attainment of Asians and whites is higher than that of blacks and Hispanics. What this study shows is that the same large differences in educational attainment are to be found among immigrants from different racial/ethnic groups. Hispanic immigrants scored the lowest of any racial/ethnic group on nearly all indicators of course-taking, educational expectations, and college-going considered in this study, just as their native counterparts of Hispanic origin do. At the same time, just as immigrant and native Hispanics' college preparation and college-going rates are consistently the lowest, those of Asians are consistently the highest, with whites and blacks in between.

Continuation of these discrepancies in educational attainment is cause for concern for two reasons. First, Hispanics constitute a growing share of the nation's students—a growth that has been fueled by twenty years of continuous and expanding immigration from Mexico and Central America.[10] Today, one in ten high school students nationwide is of Hispanic origin, about the same proportion as the African American population in high school. That proportion is much higher in some states. In California, one out of every three high school students is of Hispanic origin, and it is expected that at least two out of every five students will be of Hispanic origin by year 2005 within cohorts of students that are expected to be 20 to 25 percent larger than those of today. The level of education that these students achieve will in large part determine the future quality of the labor force.

A second reason is that educational institutions *alone* cannot enhance significantly the educational attainment of Hispanics (and other similarly situated youths). We found that, by and large, the same individual and family factors significantly affect the high school graduation and college-going rates of all racial/ethnic groups and of natives and immigrants. These factors include family resources, education of parents, and attitudes toward and expectations for education of both students and their parents. It is the difference between Hispanics and other racial/ethnic groups in the value of these factors that in most part explains why Hispanics' educational attainment is lower than that of other groups.[11] We have shown in Chapter Two that Hispanics are at least twice as likely to have an income in the lowest quartile and more than three times more likely to have two parents with less than a high school education. And Hispanic students and their parents have lower educational aspirations than members of other ethnic groups.

Income assistance and financial assistance for education can alleviate the income gap between Hispanics and other groups. But funding for these programs is being reduced at the same time as college tuition and fees have been increasing very rapidly. Short of a reversal of current budgetary and policy trends, low income will remain a barrier to the enhancement of educational attainment of not only low-income Hispanics but of all students in low-income families.

The other two factors—low education levels of parents and educational expectations of students and of parents for their children—may not be easily amenable to change. Certainly, programs directed at increasing parental involvement in the education of their children and adult education programs including English language instruction, high school equivalency classes, vocational training, and workshops on effective parenting are steps in the right

direction. But demand for these programs far exceeds the supply, and funding for such programs has been declining at the same time as the need for them has been growing. Furthermore, we do not know how effective these relatively new programs are with respect to enhancing the educational attainment of targeted youths. A few English and literacy classes are unlikely to compensate for an education that for many Hispanic immigrant parents stopped at the 8th grade or even below. And we do not fully understand the considerations and processes that affect students' educational expectations and those of parents for their children and why these expectations have been found to decline across generations of immigrants. Further research is needed to develop strategies that specifically address these barriers to increased educational attainment.

4. *Immigrant youths, most particularly those of Hispanic origin, who enter the country after the age of 15 or so, are less likely to enter the U.S. school system or stay in school than children who come at an earlier age. The number of such children is not negligible.*

In-school participation rates of high school age youths are generally similar to those for Asian, black, and white natives, hovering around 91 to 95 percent. In contrast, only 73 percent of immigrant youths of Mexican origin and 88 percent of other Hispanics (mostly Central American) are reported to be in school. We provided some evidence (Chapter Two) that these youths are not just drop-outs from U.S. schools; rather, they are failing to "drop in" to the school system in the first place. In any one year, the number of such immigrant youths has not been very large—about 37,000 and 25,000 nationwide and in California, respectively, or about 4 percent and 2 percent of the high-school-age cohort, respectively. Over time, however, the number of these youths is growing rapidly, reaching hundreds of thousands of young adults without a high school diploma and, hence, with low prospects for economic mobility over their lifetimes.

Strategies to encourage these youths to continue their education in the United States need to be developed. School-based outreach programs may be helpful in this respect, although they will probably not be sufficient. These youths are likely to have been out of school for a year or more in their country of origin even before arriving here. They may also have to work to support themselves and their families. Thus, they may not have the capabilities to pursue an education in U.S. schools without receiving considerable remedial education, and they may face strong financial disincentives to do so in the first place.

In conclusion, today's immigrants may be performing in U.S. educational institutions as well if not better than their native counterparts. But the racial/

ethnic compositional change that has been driven by immigration over the past twenty-five years has created a situation in which a growing segment of the population, primarily of Hispanic origin, significantly lags other racial/ethnic groups in its educational attainment. In some areas of the country, the proportion of such youths exceeds one-third, jeopardizing not only their own future economic opportunities but also the quality of tomorrow's labor force. It is also increasing the demand placed on public services. Enhancing the educational attainment of these children and youths is not a task that the country's educational institutions can accomplish alone. Effective strategies directed at overcoming parental low income, low education, and low educational expectations for their children must also be designed and implemented.

NOTES

1. Georges Vernez and Allan Abrahamse, *How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education*, MR-718-AMF, Santa Monica, CA: RAND. Used by permission. This report is one of three produced by the Institute on Education and Training, Center for Research on Immigration Policy, RAND (Santa Monica, CA) that examine the participation and performance of immigrant children in U.S. elementary, secondary, and higher education. The other two reports focus on the effects of increasing immigration on U.S. schools and on higher education institutions, respectively: Lorraine M. McDonnell and Paul T. Hill, *Newcomers in American Schools: Meeting the Educational Needs of Immigrant Youth*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-103-AWM/PRIP, 1993; Maryann Jacobi Gray, Elizabeth S. Rolph, and Elan Melamid, *Immigration and Higher Education: Institutional Responses to Changing Demographics*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-751-AMF, 1996.

2. McDonnell and Hill (1993) and Gray and Rolph (1996).

3. Although the current number of immigrants is the highest at any time in U.S. history, its proportion in the U.S. population is lower than in any decade from the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1930s, when it ranged from 13.2 to 14.7 percent.

4. All data analyzed in this chapter were derived from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

5. Includes persons who responded yes to the census question of whether they have "attended regular school or college, including nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, and schooling which leads to a high school diploma or a college degree."

6. See Chapter One for a description of these data and the limitations. HSB is based on a national sample; it did not allow examining separately patterns for California or any other state. Nor did it allow separating Asians and Hispanics into subgroups.

7. The graduation rate was measured two years from the year in which he/she would have normally graduated. Even though 17 percent of sophomores did not complete high school within those two years, almost half of these eventually received a high school degree or an equivalency certificate within six years of their sophomore year (Ogle and Alsalam, 1990, p. 20).
8. In Chapter Six, we examine whether these attitudes and aspirations are associated with participation in postsecondary education.
9. These findings are consistent with recent ones from a survey of 189 adolescent students in Mexico and the United States conducted by Marcelo and Carola Suárez-Orozco and reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1996. They found that Mexican immigrants valued schooling more than second-generation Mexicans. The significant lowering in expectations between Hispanic immigrant youths (and their parents) and Hispanic native youths (and their parents) merits further investigation to determine what may be causing it. Understanding this may be key to helping Hispanics increase their educational attainment. See also Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (1995).
10. Because Hispanics are younger and have higher fertility rates than other racial/ethnic groups, their relative growth will continue regardless of whether Congress approves legislation that would reduce the level of immigration to that of the 1980s.
11. We do not argue that the individual and family factors considered in this study are the only ones determining educational attainment, only that these factors play a significant role.

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What Does the National Research Council Study[1] Tell Us about Educating Language Minority Children?

Charles L. Glenn

Foreword by *Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.*

The National Research Council (NRC) recently published its report on the status of bilingual education research and the direction of future studies. The READ Institute commissioned an analysis of this critical document by Professor Charles L. Glenn of Boston University, who serves on the READ Academic Panel.

The intent of the NRC study is to report on what we know about educating limited-English students at present—twenty-nine years after the first federal law on bilingual education was enacted—and to suggest further research to improve school programs. The authors of this study claim that we do not know very much about how bilingual children learn or how best to teach them, suggesting that many more years of research and much more money is needed to investigate these topics.

Glenn points out what this study actually accomplishes. In its honest appraisal of the field, this study demolishes the myths on which bilingual education is based. While the NRC study treads very gently around each one of the following conclusions, it in fact directly contradicts what has been bilingual education dogma for years:

- There is no evidence yet that there will be long-term advantages or disadvantages to teaching limited-English students in the native language.
- Teaching children to read in English first, instead of in the native language, does not have negative consequences.
- Emphasizing cultural and ethnic differences in the classroom is counterproductive—it leads to stereo-typing, reinforces the differences from majority children, and does not lead to better self-esteem for language minority children.
- There is no research support for the idea that teachers who are themselves members of minority groups are more effective than others who work with children from those same groups.

- The U.S. Department of Education's management of bilingual education research has been a total failure: wasting hundreds of millions of dollars; using the research agenda for political purposes to justify a program that has not proven its worth; and not making its research available to the educators who could use it to improve their school programs.

Glenn reviews this alarming report in measured terms. But he reserves his strongest disapproval for the final recommendations. He insists that there is no sane reason to spend more years searching for a "model" teaching program to play around with, while another generation of language minority students is damaged by inferior schooling. And there is certainly no reason to put any future research in the hands of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA).

Glenn concludes with several sensible ideas, briefly paraphrased here. It is time we trust what we *do* know about teaching poor children, regardless of ethnic background, taking language into account. Let us stop putting our faith in research on second language acquisition alone. We need to know more about how to overcome the underachievement of Latino children and why they are outperformed by children of other immigrant groups. As Glenn emphasizes in his conclusion, "Bilingual education is not of itself the solution to the underachievement of any group of poor children."

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INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, the distinguished historian of education Carl Kaestle of the University of Chicago wrote an article with the dishearteningly honest title "The Awful Reputation of Education Research."[2] His own reputation needs no defense, nor does that of Stanford's Kenji Hakuta, but the sad fact is that the awful reputation of education research is too often deserved. Or so we are forced to conclude by reading the massive study put together by Hakuta, Kaestle, and others for the National Research Council.[3]

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and by grants from the Spencer, Carnegie, Pew, MacArthur, Mellon and other foundations, the study reviews the research carried out over the past thirty years on the schooling of what it prefers to refer to as "English-language learners" rather than as "limited-English-proficient" students. It does so, as the name of the report indicates, in order to propose what research should be carried out in the future, and how it should be organized, implemented, and assessed.

The report is not intended, then, as a systematic account of what we can and should learn from the existing research about how to educate language-minority children effectively, but inevitably it will and should be used for that purpose by those who must make decisions *now* about the children who are in our schools *now* and about the teachers who are being trained or retrained *now* to serve those children. There has been too much mystification on the subject, too many assertions that "research proves" this or that when it does no such thing. The reader of this report's 400 pages should come away with at least a healthy agnosticism, and perhaps also with confidence in the few things that it seems we *do* know about what works.

But the "awful reputation" is unfortunately deserved. It turns out that something like $100 million has been spent on research and evaluation of bilingual education over the last thirty years, with remarkably little in the way of bankable results that have been applied to practice. (Editors comment: The current NRC study alone carries a $500,000 price tag.) What we do know after all these years is often not reflected in the practice of school programs, which roll on with a momentum and a logic all their own.

Let's look at what they report that we *do* know with some confidence. The report is divided into sections corresponding to domains of research and practice, which we will consider in turn.

Bilingualism and Second-language Learning

Bilingualism has different meanings in different contexts and indeed for different individuals, as Joshua Fishman and others have pointed out. The word does not describe a single phenomenon, nor does it of itself tell us whether a given bilingual person is more or less proficient in either of the languages than a given monolingual person. In some cases, the bilingual person may have intellectual advantages, including greater conceptual flexibility, than a monolingual counterpart; in other cases he or she may not reach a high level of functioning in either language. Hakuta[4] and others have shown that much depends upon how a child is exposed to the two languages, though two children with the same opportunities to learn may not become equally bilingual. Social class, natural endowment, family dynamics, and the status of both languages in the child's environment have an enormous, hard-to-disentangle effect; "second-language acquisition is a complex process requiring a diverse set of explanatory factors" (p. 35).

The NRC report provides an interesting overview of research on the relationship between the age at which a second language is studied and the de-

velopment of proficiency in that language. In brief, older (teenaged) learners are more efficient at mastering vocabulary and grammar, but are not so good at learning to pronounce a new language, and those who learn a language as an adult often never lose their accent, even if they come to use the new language exclusively. "The earlier the better" is not a good rule if efficient learning is the goal, though no harm seems to be done by early exposure to learning a second language and often—as the Canadian immersion studies show—it can result in greater language proficiency over the long run.

Early exposure to English in school for language-minority students is opposed by many bilingual-education advocates, however, often arguing in justification that children with a solid academic background in their first language acquired before coming to the United States tend to do better at academic work in English than do children without such a background. That seems like common sense, but it does not necessarily follow that the child's American school should pretend for five to seven years (the time often advocated) that the child is still in Honduras or Portugal. Nor would this be likely to work.

It seems likely that the main reason that some bilingual education advocates call for teaching language-minority children exclusively or mainly through their home language for the first few years of their schooling in the United States is to seek to retard what otherwise is likely to be a rapid shift to the use of English. Much as some of us would like to think that Americans could become as bilingual as, say, Swedes or Dutch, it seems very unlikely; one study cited "found that the amount of language loss occurring in the United States in a single generation would have taken about 350 years in other nations investigated" (p. 40).

We often assume that the *personality* or the *attitude* of the language-minority student toward learning English are decisive factors, but the NRC report found little evidence for this in the research (page 39). Just about everyone with experience in schools believes that classrooms which stimulate students to use a second language are more likely to help them to learn it, but "few studies have tried to link classroom communication and the learning of linguistic features, and those that have done so have not been successful" (p. 41).

The chapter concludes (as do each of the others that follow) that much more research is needed, even though—or because—the research to date has produced so few usable results.

COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LEARNING: LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND CONTENT LEARNING

After a useful discussion of what research outside the bilingual education orbit has found out (and it is quite a lot) about how children in general learn, the NRC report concludes that we don't know much about how any of this applies to language-minority children. "With regard to reading instruction in a second language, there is remarkably little directly relevant research" (p. 59). How should instruction in content areas be sequenced? "At this point, we know next to nothing about these questions" (p. 70).

There are, fortunately, a few glimmers of what we *do* know works for language-minority children. For example, we apparently know that direct instruction in phonics and other "processing" skills is more important for these children than it is for middle-class English monolingual children. While "whole language" methods have their place in stimulating language use, "many believe that [language-minority] children are at considerable risk in classrooms that provide only a whole-language environment with no direct reading instruction" (p. 58). That's important to know.

Other findings are more pedestrian; for example, it is scarcely a breakthrough to learn that "skilled readers can tolerate a small proportion of unknown words in texts...but if the proportion of unknown words is too high, comprehension is disrupted" (p. 62).

The authors take a refreshingly agnostic position on one of the central articles of faith of bilingual-education advocates, that children must be taught to read first in the language which they speak at home. "It is clear," they note,

> that many children first learn to read in a second language without serious negative consequences. These include children in early-immersion, two-way, and English as a second language (ESL)-based programs in North America, as well as those in formerly colonial countries that have maintained the official language [of the colonizer] as the medium of instruction, immigrant children in Israel, children whose parents opt for elite international schools, and many others.... The high literacy achievement of Spanish-speaking children in English-medium Success for All schools...that feature carefully-designed direct literacy instruction suggests that even children from low-literacy homes can learn to read. (p. 60)

Later in the report, indeed, the authors conclude candidly that "We do not yet know whether there will be long-term advantages or disadvantages to initial literacy instruction in the primary language versus English, given a very high-quality program of known effectiveness in both cases" (p. 179). Only those

familiar with the field can appreciate how heretical this concession is, and how unwelcome it will be to those who urge that it is essential to postpone exposure to reading in English until reading is solidly mastered in the home language. It is disheartening, however, to learn that

> an insufficient attempt has been made to understand the cognitive processes underlying successful transfer of first-language literacy skill to the second language, the limitations on that transfer, the conditions that optimize positive and minimize negative transfer, or the differences between children who manage learning to read in a second language well and those who do not. (p. 72)

It is as though the celebrated *dicta* of Jim Cummins fifteen to twenty years ago, arguing on the basis of thin research evidence that transfer from first to second language would occur and indeed *must* occur if language-minority children were not to be permanently damaged in their cognitive development,[5] had simply been accepted as sufficient evidence without further investigation of whether this is true, how it might actually occur and what can promote it. Or so it seems from the NRC account.

Perhaps the most interesting—though too brief and general—discussion in this section has to do with how the epistemological characteristics of different academic subjects may affect the ability of students with an uncertain proficiency in English to get their minds around a subject which draws upon domain-specific concepts and syntax (p. 67–68). The authors suggest that "integrating subject-specific terminology into language classes helps English-language learners better comprehend the subject matter" (p. 68).

An important point follows from this. We know that "language interactions—questioning, expert explanations, discussions of alternative solutions, formulation of reasons for conclusions—contribute to the development of understanding of complex subject matter" in any curriculum domain. But what does this imply for how we should ensure that language-minority children can participate effectively in the more advanced levels of the curriculum? Should we hold them back from learning situations that may demand a higher level of functioning in English than they are capable of? Wouldn't that deny them even the opportunity to complete the academic program on a par with other students? Or should we seek to provide all of the more "complex subject matter" in their home language? But quite apart from the practical difficulty and expense of doing so, for how long should or could such "separate but equal" education persist? The longer it went on, surely, the more difficult it would become for students to make the switch to dealing with ever-more-complex material in English.

Finally, how can non-bilingual teachers learn to present academic content in a way that is accessible to language-learners without "watering it down" in a manner which serves neither their interests nor those of the monolingual English-speakers in the classroom? Some complex themes and materials can be presented adequately in ways which are syntactically more clear and comprehensible than is ordinarily the case (and perhaps for the benefit of all students!), but others cannot without a loss of significant nuance. Learning to listen for nuance and subtle connections is an important part of becoming an effective student, and one which should not be withheld from language minority students. Nor is it clear that simplification will always do the trick; "Abedi, for example, simplified items using syntactical structures only and was unsuccessful in increasing performance" by English-language learners (p. 74).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF SCHOOL LEARNING

There may be no aspect of education about which more nonsense is given solemn utterance than about how it is influenced by social and cultural factors. Everyone knows these are real and can even be decisive, but the explanations and remedies are often foolish. The NRC report is refreshingly debunking in this respect.

For example, we are familiar with the research of Stevenson and Stigler, suggesting that Asian parents and children believe that academic success is the result of hard work, with some children simply having to work harder or longer than others to achieve the same results, while Americans attribute success to ability and are wont to say complacently "I'm no good at math." But the NRC report tells us that

> in the United States, however, these ethnic differences are eliminated or even reversed: second-generation Korean American children attribute success to ability more than do European American children...and high achievers across a variety of ethnic groups (African American, Latino, Indochinese American, and European American, all low-income) attribute their success to their high innate ability. (p. 92)

What is more, we learn, "Latino and Indochinese immigrant children...have similar perceptions of parental socialization strategies and similar theories of educational success and failure. Nonetheless, the Indochinese immigrants were found to perform better than the Latino children" (p. 92). Why? And is there anything we can learn from that which could benefit the latter? Not even a speculation is offered, no doubt because of the sensitivity of the theme.

What about intergroup relations in the classroom? Contrary to the common practice of encouraging children to celebrate their ethnic distinctiveness, the NRC study finds that "to increase positive intergroup contact, the salience of group characteristics should be minimized, and a superordinate group with which students from different cultural and language groups can become identified should be constructed" (p. 94).

In other words, well-meaning efforts to persuade the children in a class to identify how they differ "culturally" because of their differing ancestry are likely to be counter-productive. One of my daughters, aged 8, asked me the other evening for help with a homework assignment requiring her to identify her cultural group (she said that the teacher had told one classmate to describe her culture as "white American") and what its customs and values were; she was having difficulty coming up with any ways in which our family differs from those of her Latino and African-American classmates. I explained that "white" and "black" are not cultural categories, and that almost everyone in our society, including the most recent immigrants, share the same values and have the same hopes for their children. My daughter and I made a list of what we wear and eat and what holidays we celebrate and how we believe people should be treated, and agreed that José's family and Ariel's family were probably a lot like us. Differences are interesting, but it is what we have in common which is important.

Perhaps I may be permitted to quote the discussion on this point from my own recent book on the education of immigrant children in twelve countries (gratifyingly cited a number of times by the NRC report). I wrote:

> There is an unfortunate tendency toward stereotyping in attempts to adapt school programs to the supposed demands of cultural diversity. It is conventional wisdom, for example, that Latino pupils recoil from the competitive atmosphere that allegedly rules in American classrooms, and would do better if instruction were organized on a cooperative basis. Actual research on preferred styles, however, has in at least one case found that Anglo pupils were more cooperative than Latino pupils![6] Research has also failed to confirm the belief that Mexican-American teachers, parents, and children differ from their Anglo counterparts in how they perceive classroom interactions.[7] Common sense and the research on styles of cognition suggest that there is far more difference *within* ethnic groups in how individuals learn or relate to school than there is between groups.
>
> Even when there are culturally-based differences in learning style, it is not clear what implications for instruction are appropriate. A study of

> American Indian children in school found that their participation styles were very different from those of non-Indian American children; however, Philips concluded, placing the Indian children in a separate class, while it would reduce that conflict, would prepare them poorly for participation in the wider society. "The point is not that one set of values or behaviors replaces the other, but that the children have access to both sets so that they can form from both their unique bicultural identity."[8] Another study did not "find support for the common conclusion that adapting instruction to Native Americans' learning style will increase achievement."[9] Earlier research found that "culturally relativistic" teachers, influenced by anthropological literature on culture and teaching for altruistic reasons, were ineffective with Indian children and reinforced their differences from majority children.[10]
>
> Attempts to make schools more supportive of minority pupils by incorporating elements of minority cultures run the risk of becoming patronizing.... Too much "sensitivity" can mislead children about the real costs of making it in the dominant culture, a cost that cannot be wished away....
>
> There can also be unanticipated consequences of school programs that stress cultural differences, including reinforcement of the belief, among children, that race and ethnicity are defining characteristics of fundamental importance.[11]

On this aspect of "social context," then, the NRC report could be a corrective to the assumption that we know decisively important things about individual children, and about how to educate them, when we know their ethnic background.

On the other hand, the report does not fall into the opposite mistake of a shallow optimism that we should "just put the children together and let them sort out the differences." Racial and ethnic assumptions are so deeply-rooted in our society (and probably in every society) that deliberate efforts must be made to foster equal status and positive interactions. This could involve, for example, creating situations in which the children who are members of minority groups can draw upon skills and information which they possess—such as a second language—to help a mixed group to complete a task (p. 97).

The report points to the research showing how important what children learn at home is in preparing and sustaining them for successful school experience, but acknowledges that we "know almost nothing about (socialization practices) among Puerto Rican, Santo Domingan, Central American, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Haitian, or Cape Verdean families" (p. 103). It's hard to believe, but that's what they tell us.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Potentially the most important chapter in the report, given the current direction of education reform efforts, is that which deals with assessment and its consequences. Since "every assessment is an assessment of language," it is obvious that "aptitude can be seriously underestimated if the test taker is not proficient in the language in which the test is being given" (pp. 120–21).

At present, two conceptions of accountability for academic results are competing in American policy debates—and in Britain as well. One argues that we should set clear standards for what students should be able to know and to do at various stages in their schooling, and devise valid and reliable methods of determining whether they have done so. Consequences should follow from the results of these assessments, though whether the consequences should be for the students themselves, for their individual teachers, or for their schools and school systems is hotly debated.

Critics argue that it is simply unreasonable to expect that language-minority students in general (or, in a variation, poor children in general) will be able to perform as well on assessments conducted through the English language as other ("majority") students in general, and that holding them to the same standards will be unfair to them, to their teachers, and/or to their schools and systems, depending upon which menu of consequences is followed. Instead, a "value-added" approach is urged, by which the achievement of these students would be measured against either: (a) their own earlier achievement or (b) their predicted achievement, based upon well-established ("norm-referenced") assumptions about students similar to them in ethnicity, language-dominance, family characteristics, or some other dimension.

Those who call for uniform standards retort that this is to assume that schools and personal effort are incapable ever of making up for the effects of student background, and that society will or should permanently make allowances for individuals from language-minority groups. Isn't this a form of tracking, with lower expectations for some because of their social class or ethnic identity? Making allowances, they argue, is the easy way out, but we should choose the difficult but essential course of challenging and helping language-minority children to achieve up to the common standards.

A variation on either of these approaches has been to propose that schools and districts be required to meet "opportunity to learn" standards before children are held accountable for their performance on assessments. In one form, this position insists that it's not fair to test children on material which their schools have not taught, and so the curriculum and the assessments should be aligned. On the other hand, because assessments must be standardized in some

way if they are to be comparable and thus useful for accountability purposes, the alignment would seem to require that curriculum be standardized. This conflicts not only with our tradition of local control but also with the belief of many that *increased* autonomy at the school level is the key to improved performance.[12]

Another form of "opportunity to learn" is the contention that students and their teachers should not be held accountable for results until all of the conditions—primarily though not exclusively resources—are in place that are necessary for language-minority or other at-risk students to achieve to their maximum potential. Unfortunately, as the NRC report points out, "the research base for defining the most important and effective resources and conditions for English-language learners is very weak" (p. 128).

That is a stunning conclusion, though passed over rather quickly. After all these years and all these studies, we reportedly still don't know what resources and what conditions make a difference for these students. What did those tens of millions of dollars go for? we want to ask. Are we still just flying by the seat of our pants in educating those millions of children? These are questions that come up again and again in reading this painfully honest report.

The trend of national and state policy-making over the past several years is to insist upon the inclusion of language-minority children in programs to assess student performance; this is reflected in the *Department of Education Organization Act* of 1994, in *Goals 2000*, in the reauthorization of *Title I* and *Title VII*, and in the *Reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement*, as well as in school reform legislation in Massachusetts and other states. It might seem obvious that we would want to know how well language-minority children are doing in school, but in fact for many years such accountability has been quietly resisted.

Several years ago I served on the Governor's Commission on Bilingual Education in Massachusetts; we found that there was essentially no data on how tens of thousands of students had done over twenty-five years in the state-mandated program, because the state office responsible had never developed a method of ensuring that accountability for results was built in. I was not surprised, since for nearly twenty years, as the state official responsible for urban education and equity, I had fought unsuccessfully to persuade my colleagues in the bilingual education office that knowing how students are doing is essential to holding schools accountable for serving them more effectively. I was told repeatedly—and the State Board was persuaded—that testing language minority students would damage their fragile self-esteem!

The NRC report summarizes the new requirements at the federal level as:

- Standards and assessments are to fully include English-language learners.
- Innovative ways of assessing student performance are encouraged, including modifications to existing instruments for English-language learners.
- Programs are to be evaluated with respect to whether they meet "challenging" performance standards, rather than on a normative or comparative basis.
- Evaluations are to be useful for program improvement as well as program accountability. (page 132)

It sounds, at first blush, as though Congress has come down squarely on the side of uniform high expectations, but it seems likely that there will be a lot of wiggle-room in developing "innovative ways of assessing" and "modifications." For example, why not provide certain assessments in Spanish, to determine whether Latino children are making progress in various academic domains while acquiring proficiency in English? But how do we ensure that a test translated into Spanish still measures the same level of achievement, the experts ask, and in fact many language minority children are not that strong in their first language; "immigrant children may acquire a less-developed knowledge of grammar in their first language as a result of their limited exposure to use of that language in their new communities" (p. 129). Indeed, "a frequent feature of immigrant bilingualism is that seemingly more difficult tasks may be performed better in the second than in the first language (p. 36). It is not clear, then, that testing children in their home language will be any more "fair" than doing so in English.

The NRC report provides an overview of the assessment challenges, but little assurance that solutions are within our grasp if we just make effective use of the results of the past thirty years of research. The authors raise many questions and propose many lines of future research, but offer very few answers.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

A valuable chapter discusses the major evaluations of bilingual education and its alternatives. Perhaps it would be useful to summarize how the NRC review reports the conclusions of those here, without entering into the criticisms raised about the methodology of each.

The American Institutes for Research (1978) study "showed that students in bilingual education programs did not gain more than students not in such programs" (p. 142).

The National Longitudinal Evaluation (1984, 1989) found, among other things, that "too heavy a concentration on any one aspect of the English-language learner's education can detract from achievement in other areas," and that student achievement "is facilitated by different approaches, depending on student background factors." Not surprisingly, "proficiency in mathematics when tested in English seems to require proficiency in English," at least in the later grades (p. 144).

The Immersion Study (1991, and often referred to as the Ramirez study) found little difference in results among three models of instruction, though both those that stressed Spanish and those that stressed English seemed to do better than those that did neither and thus were incoherent. Reassuringly, but hardly a ringing vindication, "students in all three programs realized a growth in English-language and reading skills that was as rapid or more so than the growth that would be expected for these children had they not received any intervention" (p. 145). In other words, at least the programs didn't do them any harm.

The National Research Council Report (1992) on the statistical approaches used in the latter two studies found that they "did not provide decisive evidence about the effectiveness of bilingual programs," but there was some evidence that "kindergarten and first grade students [who] received academic instruction in Spanish had higher achievement in reading than comparable students who received academic instruction in English" (pp. 145–46).

Turning to studies that attempted to summarize and draw conclusions from the results of research, Baker and de Kanter (1981) found that "the case for the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education is so weak that exclusive reliance upon this instruction method is clearly not justified" (p. 146).

Subsequent studies returned to the same research to attempt to squeeze out more definite conclusions. Willig (1985) concluded that there *were* some positive effects of bilingual instruction in all major academic areas. On the other hand, Rossell and Ross (1986) and Rossell and Baker (1996) found that "structured immersion," with a specially trained teacher who is fluent in the native language of the students but teaches exclusively in English, is more effective than instruction through the native language (p. 147). Finally, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1987) conducted a truly goofy study, asking ten experts on bilingual education what they thought about bilingual education, with predictable results.

The conclusion reached by the current NRC report seems entirely sensible:

> we see little value in conducting evaluations to determine which type of program is best. First, the key issue is not finding a program that works for all children and all localities, but rather a set of program components that works for the children in the community of interest.... We think it better to focus on components than on programs. As we argue later, successful bilingual and [English-language] immersion programs may contain many common elements. (p. 149)

Thus do they dismiss as poorly conceived a research strategy that has consumed tens of millions of dollars in federal funds and, more seriously, has provided the pretext not to fix what was obviously broken in our programs for language-minority students until we had the result of yet another large-scale study to provide the definitive answer.

In one of their moments of unintentional comedy, the authors assure the reader that "it would be a serious mistake to say we have learned nothing from the enterprise. We see that five general lessons have been learned from the past twenty-five years of program evaluation:

1. Higher-quality program evaluations are needed.
2. Local evaluations need to be made more informative.
3. Theory-based interventions need to be created and evaluated.
4. We need to think in terms of components, not politically motivated labels.
5. A developmental model needs to be created for use in predicting the effects of program components on children in different environments. (p. 151)

The non-researcher is stunned by the first two recommendations. Aren't they obvious, haven't they been obvious for twenty-five years? What have evaluators, and those who pay for evaluation, thought they were doing? As the later chapter on "issues related to the research infrastructure" documents painfully, management by the Department of Education of the tens of millions of dollars of program evaluation mandated by Congress has been a total failure. Either those administering the program have been incompetent, or (more likely) they have not taken seriously whether bilingual education was producing solid academic results. Bilingual education has apparently been considered a self-evident good, not as simply a means to the higher good of enabling language minority students to flourish and achieve.

The third recommendation is also obvious, and the fact that it is felt necessary to make it in 1997 is disturbing. "Programs should be designed so they are

consistent with what is known about basic learning processes" (p. 155). Yes indeed; that's why we try, in schools of education, to teach future teachers something about how children learn and, increasingly, about how proficiency is developed in a second language. But we would expect that those who have designed programs for language-minority students had taken care to make them consistent with what is known about how children learn.

My hunch, from studying how such programs are designed and adopted in this and other countries, is that the NRC report is quite correct in suggesting that no such care has been taken. Two competing theories have been in the air, each owing more to political than to educational developments: that language-minority children need to be taught for a number of years through their home language, or that children need to be exposed as early and consistently as possible to the language which they will use primarily for the rest of their lives. The advocates of the first position consider those of the second complicit in "linguicide" and cultural imperialism, while being considered in turn guilty of ethnic separatism and self-interest. The debate over what language to use has consumed so much energy that little has been left over for considering what ought to happen between teacher and student, in whatever language. Meanwhile, most teachers have muddled along as best they could with little guidance from solid knowledge about what works.

At this point, the authors of the NRC report drop in one of their little gems of good sense, which we could wish appeared on the cover rather than at page 158. Effective "bilingual" programs and effective "immersion" programs may be quite similar, characterized in both cases by:

- Some native-language instruction, especially initially;
- For most students, a relatively early phasing in of English instruction; and
- Teachers specially trained in instructing English-language learners.

If they were willing (and I have no reason to believe they would not be) to add additional features, early and consistent integration with native speakers of English, and the expectation that they will achieve to the same high standard, we would be in complete agreement. This is consistent with the conclusions of the careful study of the same body of research by Christine Rossell and Keith Baker, itself cited by the NRC report.

STUDIES OF SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM EFFECTIVENESS

The real issue is not program models, but schools and classrooms. Language minority children tend to learn a lot in schools where the other children are

also learning a lot, and not to learn much in schools that also don't work for the others. There is thus an appropriate interest in seeing whether we can learn from the "effective schools" research any lessons that would help us to define what is an effective school for language minority students, and perhaps the most important research covered in this report is that along these lines by Carter and Chatfield, Tikunoff, Berman and others.

Unfortunately, the recent fashion has been to define as "effective" schools that are considered by observers to be "exemplary," whether or not there is concrete evidence in student outcomes. The charisma of a principal may thus lead to a school being selected for study, and the study may in turn conclude that a charismatic principal is what is most needed for a school to be effective.

> Independent measures of student achievement are not in the data set reported by most of these investigators. In schools or classrooms with large numbers of English-language learners, this is often the case because investigators could not find adequate student achievement data to verify the validity of the nominations. (p. 166)

As a result, it is difficult to have complete confidence in the prescriptions arising out of this literature, and even more difficult to know how the features of a successful school can be transferred to an unsuccessful school.

Once again, the authors of the NRC report offer some good common sense, suggesting that "one important way to raise teacher expectations is to raise student achievement by creating structures at a school and helping teachers acquire skills and knowledge needed to be more successful with students, rather than by exhorting teachers to raise their expectations" (p. 175). That bears paraphrasing: *don't tell teachers they should have high expectations for what their students will achieve, but show them instead how to help their students to achieve these high expectations.*

Common sense also triumphs in their approval of schools that "plan for the needs of newcomers (newly arrived students who immigrated to this country after the early elementary grades) and include in the design of their programs strategies to meet their needs" (p. 177). Like so much else in the NRC report, this may seem obvious, but in fact it is all too common for such students to be simply dumped into a bilingual class of the appropriate age level, with students who are in their third or fourth year and should be doing their class-work almost exclusively in English. Teachers are then constrained to use the home language much of the time to accommodate the newcomers, with the result that the other children do not progress in English as they should. The presence of newcomers also tends to work against integration of bilingual and regular classes.

The common European model, by contrast, is to put all newcomers into a special reception class for one year or, in rare cases, for two, and then to integrate them into regular classes, with on-going extra support as needed. This usually includes the opportunity to continue, as an elective, to study the heritage language and culture. It should be noted (contrary to the widespread impression here) that most Western European educational systems have a higher proportion of immigrant children than is the case in the United States, and that in none of them are separate bilingual classes the norm.[13]

The NRC report reserves its warmest approval for the Success for All program developed by Robert Slavin and his associates, reporting that it "has significant and important effects on the achievement of English-language learners, regardless of whether they are in a primary language [i.e., 'bilingual'] or sheltered English program." They note also that

> there is nothing in the Success for All literature indicating that cultural validation or cultural accommodation per se is an important element of the program or, indeed, that culture plays any direct role at all (aside from language). Success for All is an intensive, prescriptive, well-conceptualized program designed to help as many children as possible leave third grade reading at grade level. (p. 179)

In effect, Success for All operates on the premise that children are children and deserve to be taught in a challenging and effective way that enables them to succeed. As a result, culturally and organizationally "the program is no different for African American students in Baltimore than for Latinos in bilingual education or sheltered English programs in California or for Cambodians in an ESL program in Philadelphia" (p. 180).

This approach, they note, "runs counter not only to much of the accepted wisdom in the school reform literature, but also to previous efforts to disseminate and replicate effective programs" (p. 191) in its assumption that a model can in effect be plugged in successfully with different teachers and different types of students. If it turns out the Success for All does in fact represent such a replicable package, we may find the question of when to use home language and when to use English becoming a distinctly secondary consideration rather than the all-important symbolic issue it is today.

The authors report that a number of studies of instructional practices have shown, not surprisingly, that "effective teachers for English-language learners use explicit skills instruction for certain tasks, mostly (though not always) to help students acquire basic skills" (p. 181).

The chapter ends with the usual catalog of issues on which more research is needed, some as all-encompassing as "to examine the effects of instructional interventions and social environments on the linguistic, social, and cognitive development of young children" (p. 193) or "to determine the resources required for effective instruction of English-language learners in different contexts" and "the benefits and shortcomings of different improvement strategies" (p. 197), and other issues as concrete as "to assess the effectiveness of newcomer programs" (p. 194).

PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

This section of the NRC report focuses upon descriptions of several programs that are considered in one way or another exemplary. Continuing education of teachers is illustrated by the Cooperative Learning in Bilingual Settings project of CRESPAR, the Center for Research in Educating Students Placed at Risk of Johns Hopkins University, and by the English for Speakers of Other Languages project of the Dade County Public Schools. Recruitment of language-minority staff and pre-service education are illustrated by the Latino Teacher Project of the University of Southern California. Re-credentialing of teachers to allow them to work with English-language learners is illustrated by the California Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development Program (CLAD).

These all seem worthy initiatives, but the report's account is entirely uncritical and seems to rely entirely upon self-reporting by the various programs. No evidence is presented of whether the teachers prepared by one program or another are more effective than other teachers, and in what ways. So we are not surprised that the section on research needs related to teacher training starts from the assumption that we have to learn *everything*. After all, as they note, teacher certification programs in general "have not been empirically validated." They may well ask whether the four exemplary programs described are "based on theory, empirical evidence, or expert judgment?" (p. 268).

There seems, for example, to be no empirical support for the widely held view (the basis of several of the programs described here) that teachers who are themselves members of minority groups are more effective working with children from those groups, or better able to adapt instruction to respond to cultural differences. Research is needed, they report, on what benefit teachers gain from "supervised internships, readings, and classroom discussion." And on "factors, including theoretical knowledge, needed to support teacher learning once in the classroom and ensure that what is learned in professional de-

velopment is applied in the classroom." We need to ask whether teacher preparation should

> differ for different levels of teachers (i.e., early education, primary, secondary), as well as for teachers with different training and experience (e.g., ESL, mainstream), and if so, how? How are the needs of novice and veteran teachers different, and how does staff development accommodate these differences? (p. 269)

These questions are taken from the first three sections of research needs; seven more follow, and it would be wearisome to recount all the things we should, but don't, know according to the NRC report. Or is it possible that we do know something about what makes good teachers, but it is slippery to grasp what that is through research?

ESTIMATING POPULATION PARAMETERS

Do we even know how many children we are talking about who need special services to acquire the ability to perform ordinary classwork in English? Apparently not, despite the mountains of data which have been collected from every public school and most non-public schools. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, we are told, 907,563 school-aged children spoke English "not well or not at all," while 1,480,680 spoke it "well" and 3,934,691 "very well." In the very next sentence we are told of an "estimate" of the number of "English language learners" in schools was a suspiciously-exact 2,314,079 (p. 18). Are we to assume that many of this latter group are among those reported to speak English well? Of course, it may be that language-minority parents are overimpressed with the ability of their children in English.

The difficulty is knowing when a child's poor showing on a language assessment results from dominance in another language, and when he simply functions in English at the restricted level characteristic of millions of poor children, urban and rural, who are in no true sense bilingual (though they may be bidialectical to some degree). If the latter is the case, they are not going to be helped by instruction through a language in which they may be even less proficient than they are in English. We have tended to confuse the needs of the newly arrived immigrant who is fluent and perhaps even well schooled in a language other than English with the second- or third-generation member of an ethnic group which has largely switched to the use of English (at whatever level of academic sophistication) in the home.

European as well as American studies on language use in the home has found that, even among the first generation of immigrants, it is common for parents

Home Language of Mexicans in the United States, 1989–1990[15]

Language reportedly spoken at home (in %); remaining responses "both"	Only English	Mostly English	Mostly Spanish	Only Spanish
Foreign-born	2.9	6.1	26.2	52.3
Two foreign-born parents	12.3	28.9	17.1	7.0
One foreign-born parent	21.9	41.1	13.4	1.8
Two native-born parents	42.2	29.8	1.2	1.6
At least one native-born grandparent	36.3	34.0	5.6	1.5

to use the heritage language between themselves consistently and with the children usually, but for the children to use the host country language among themselves consistently and to some extent with their parents. That is, the children may speak the heritage language seldom, though understanding it when spoken by their elders.[14]

In fact, as the NRC study points out, "there is no common definition of limited English proficiency that would yield commonality across studies, states, or even districts within given states" (p. 299). One thing we do know, unfortunately, is that there is considerable academic failure among the Hispanic pupils who make up 73 percent of the language-minority total.

> Hispanic children (a group that includes English monolinguals as well as Spanish-speaking bilinguals), for example, score well below their non-Hispanic peers in reading throughout the elementary school years and end up on average about 4 years behind in secondary school. (p. 58)

Since black pupils also experience academic difficulties in disproportionate numbers, while immigrant children from non-Hispanic homes tend to do quite well in school, it might be worth asking whether there are factors other than unfamiliarity with English which play a decisive role. John Ogbu's hypothesis of essential differences between "voluntary" and "involuntary" minorities, or Jeff Howard's theory of why many black youth lack a sense of efficacy, and what can be done about that, might have more to offer to the effort to improve the achievement of Latino youth than more linguistic and cognitive research.

Social determinants and cultural factors in fact confound all attempts to show a clear connection between particular "treatments" and particular results, and yet the agenda of school-based research can by its nature take little account of

factors in the wider society which are likely to have considerably more impact on how fast language acquisition and language shift occur than are any changes in classroom practices. Whether Haitian immigrant youth in general make their way through the American educational system successfully or not is likely to depend upon how they perceive the opportunities open to them in the wider society, and whether they identify with middle class or underclass African-American models, much more than with how many years of instruction they are given through Kreyol. Indeed, a case could be made that the greatest benefit to many immigrant children of being in a separate bilingual class has been to limit their exposure to the peer culture of inner-city youth.

The under-achievement of Hispanics in the United States and of Turks and Moroccans in northwestern Europe, I suggested in my recent book, may have less to do with language differences than with their status in the society and how they come to terms with that status. "Cultural differences" (a notably imprecise term) may work either for or against success. Portes and Zhou contrast Haitians in Miami with Sikhs in California, arguing that the cultural distance and lack of adaptation of the latter help to explain their relative success. Haitian immigrant youth in Miami, by contrast, are overly quick to assimilate to the American models of behavior and attitude most available to them.

> Native-born black youth stereotype the Haitian youngsters as docile and subservient to whites, and make fun of the Haitians' French and Creole as well as their accents [in English]. As a result, second-generation Haitian children find themselves torn between conflicting ideas and values: to remain "Haitian," they must endure ostracism and continuing attacks in school; to become "American" (black American in this case), they must forgo their parents' dreams of making it in America through the preservation of ethnic solidarity and traditional values.... As the Haitian example illustrates, adopting the outlook and cultural ways of the native born does not necessarily represent the first step toward social and economic mobility. It may, in fact, lead to exactly the opposite. Meanwhile, immigrant youth who remain firmly ensconced in their ethnic communities may, by virtue of this fact, have a better chance for educational and economic mobility.[16]

Of course, the dysfunctional assimilation experienced by some Haitian youth is as much an indictment of a society that has not prevented the development of a demoralized underclass as it is of the choices made by young Haitians to identify with it. The readiness of immigrants to make a success of their new lives is, as Ogbu points out, generally admirable; the relevant question may be, whether the United States and other Western societies have lost their power to assimilate newcomers, whether they can recover the unspoken conviction

and unquestioned habits that allow a civil society to function even as those who make it up change.[17]

ISSUES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

It is this chapter, and the related appendices, which cause the reader's heart to sink. So many organizations and bureaus and centers with a piece of the research action, and so little good independent research being done, apparently. Because little of the available funding is provided for field-initiated research, the story of research in bilingual education is really the story of sponsored and commissioned research and evaluation. The authors state the case with their typical gentleness:

> In retrospect, however, the past 20 years has not been a heyday for research on this topic.... Nor did the research systematically contribute to improvements in practice, partly because of problems with the research methodology—an over-reliance on large-scale evaluations and effective/nominated schools research, as well as faulty and weak mechanisms for oversight of the research enterprise. (p. 377)

At the heart of the unsatisfactory progress in learning how to educate language-minority children most effectively seems to be the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA). The problem seems to be three-fold: (1) lack of competence to manage a complex research agenda (p. 315); (2) commitment to using research to bolster the case for the existing bilingual strategy, heavy with symbolic and political significance, rather than to learn what works; and (3) failure to make what is learned from the funded research available for improvement of school practice. OBEMLA's "capacity to manage research has been inconsistent [or consistently poor?] and a frequent source of controversy" (p. 361). The authors report that "even within OBEMLA, officials who worked in Title VII [bilingual education] program administration were either unaware of research results produced in OBEMLA studies or unclear about their implications" (p. 384).

Despite occasional gestures toward pulling together research results and making them available,

> instances of such synthesizing activities are outweighed in the historical record by complaints of inattention to results. There are two related problems: one is whether the agencies do anything with the research they have funded (read it, understand it, critique it, synthesize it, disseminate it); the second is whether researchers in the field have a sense of evidence being amassed, of new directions and questions coming from completed

> research, and of relatively secure knowledge accumulating.... The frequent complaints about ignored reports and lack of synthesis are symptomatic of the weak infrastructure of education research in general and of research on English-language learners in particular. (pp. 319–20)

The authors report that a budget analyst sought, in 1992, to review the 91 research or evaluation studies that had been carried out with $47 million from OBEMLA between 1980 and 1991, He could not find final reports for 40 of them, since all research files for the period 1978 to 1985 had been thrown away. Of those remaining, he judged that at best 29 might be useful in formulating policy (p. 384). Whether in fact any were used to this end seems doubtful.

As a remedy, the authors propose the establishment of yet another coordinating committee to set the agenda for research and monitor what the various funding agencies and research centers do. They are concerned that "English-language learners are not incorporated into many studies that purport to be about all students," which would seem to suggest the desirability of more effective integration, while on the other hand they stress "the need to target resources deliberately and well toward understanding issues that are specifically about English-language learners" (p. 332). The difficulty, as I know from my own experience in government, is that the existence of a unit concerned with a target population tends to function as a license for everyone else to ignore that population. The fact that tens of millions of dollars have been earmarked for research on bilingual education has no doubt encouraged others concerned with research to believe that they don't need to make special efforts to include the needs of language-minority children.

The report recommends that the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs play a leading role in setting and overseeing the research agenda. That seems wrongheaded, perpetuating the political domination of research in this field. How can OBEMLA be trusted as an unbiased messenger or build consensus when it itself is—and probably must be—an advocate for particular interests and approaches? That seems to me a strong reason to separate it completely from research, and from the evaluation of the programs which it funds. OBEMLA should concentrate upon encouraging states and school systems to implement "instruction that is grounded in basic knowledge" already available "about the linguistic, cognitive, and social development of language minority children" (p. 4). The funding and coordination of research and evaluation should be completely separate and insulated from advocacy, ensuring that the needs of language-minority students are part of the overall educational research agenda. Research and evaluation should not reinforce by their separate development the segregated schooling that too many

of them now receive. As more is learned, the instructional models will undoubtedly change, but OBEMLA should not be responsible for the evaluation of the efforts for which it is the designated advocate. Too much is at stake.

The intensely ideological nature of the issue of language-minority education (alluded to here and there in the report) is not given enough weight in the discussion of the research system. The authors recommend, for example, that "researchers and agency officials with deep research knowledge" should make the decisions about what research is funded, but in fact few of these individuals possess the objectivity that would allow research to flourish that would threaten the existing paradigm. Kenji Hakuta, as chairman of the NRC study, may attribute to others his own well-deserved reputation for objectivity.

There does seem to be a fundamental inconsistency, in a report documenting at painful length how chaotic and unproductive is government oversight of the research effort in second-language acquisition, of recommending more government coordination.

In summary, the NRC report's review of the present state of knowledge, and of how we have managed to obtain such limited results with such a major expenditure of funding for research and evaluation, are useful, accurate (so far as I am in a position to judge), and significant, but the conclusions seem rather too conventional, too content to color between the lines. The reader who has never engaged in research on language acquisition is astonished to learn how many agencies and centers have a finger in the pie, and is tempted to believe that more might be accomplished if all of them got out of the business of managing research.

A few hundred or thousand researchers based in universities and school systems, with modest grants, and subject to the disciplines of peer review that are already well established in professional circles, and communicating their results by the well-established channels which already exist independent of government, would be likely to advance the state of our knowledge far better than the present over-managed system which has produced such dismal results.

PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH

There is a disconnection between the fine review of what we do and do not know now, and the research agenda laid out in this chapter. It is not that the proposed research priorities are poorly chosen, or that it would be uninteresting to know the results of such research. The questions raised are interesting, but I have a sense that they are raised too late, at least for the purpose of guiding

policy and practice in the education of language-minority children. These are the questions which should have formed the research agenda twenty-five years ago, before the expenditure of two billion dollars of federal and unknown billions of dollars of state funds on an instructional approach that, as the authors point out, was an act of faith not based upon solid research or evaluation.

More importantly, these questions should have been asked and answered before two entire generations of language-minority students passed through our schools, from kindergarten through high school (those who persisted), with in all too many cases an inadequate education.

Some of what we apparently already know from research is so obvious, of course, that it seems scarcely worth finding out: "For example, Spanish-speaking children score higher on National Assessment of Educational Progress vocabulary items that have Spanish cognates (such a 'fiesta') than would be predicted by their overall performance on the assessment" (p. 352). Does that mean we should include more such items, or eliminate them altogether lest these children have an unfair advantage?

But important and serious questions are also raised in this chapter, and we can only hope that many researchers will be inspired—and funded—to address them. Every advance in knowledge in this area is a good thing. It is not clear, however, that it is necessary—or feasible—to have research-based answers to these questions before choices are made about how to educate language-minority children. Too often in the past those choices have been deferred pending another study or another review of research. If it accomplishes nothing else, the NRC report should demonstrate conclusively that such delay is irresponsible. We should get on with what we already know, and part of what we know is that there is no magic bullet or one-size-fits-all solution that can be worked out by researchers and applied in every school.

The NRC report insists that we continue to pursue the chimera of determining, through research and evaluation, what the best "model" of education would be, even though they have shown that we know very little about how different children from different language groups and different social circumstances learn different skills and different subjects in different schools. They call for "a model of instruction that is grounded in basic knowledge about the linguistic, cognitive, and social development of language minority children. This model would be rich enough to suggest different programs for different types of students" (p. 4). What sort of a coherent model could possibly take into account all of the human and institutional and curricula differences?

Despite this hesitation, the reader is tempted to say, Great, let's do it! Let's be sure that states and school systems are implementing good programs based upon solid research, and that they have adequate resources and good teachers to do so well. But that's not what the authors have in mind. "It would take time to formulate such a model," they continue, even though we have tons (literally) of government-funded research as well as experience with programs in thousands of schools; surely there must be someone smart and experienced enough to sit down and write up what we have already learned in an accessible way, so we can go ahead and start educating better?

When the model has been developed by "researchers from very different backgrounds" (and think how long it would take for them to agree!), the authors write, it

> would be implemented in a small number of settings.... Throughout implementation, the process would be observed and described, and the implementation would be reworked. Once successful implementation has been demonstrated, the programs would be formally evaluated for outcomes.... Hypotheses could be generated about the generalizability of the findings to new sites.... At this point, the programs could be disseminated as promising, and experimentation in other local sites encouraged. Once the model had been validated across a wide range of settings...[and so forth]. (p. 4)

Years and years and years, no doubt, added to the thirty years during which such "pilot" efforts have been designed and implemented and evaluated countless times. And meanwhile linguistic minority children have been, by all accounts (though with some notable exceptions which should be replicated vigorously), deplorably educated. *Basta*, enough! Policy and practice should move ahead with what we already know.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, Kenji Hakuta and his associates in the NRC study report that we know a fair amount from research about how children acquire a second language, but not much about whether language minority (hereafter "LM") children are doing so or how to make them successful in their academic subjects. The report suggests that

> [p]riority should be given to legitimate research questions that are of strong interest to...educators, policymakers, and the public at large.... The major areas of concern common to these groups are program evaluation and accountability, the extent to which students are acquiring English and progressing academically, and the characteristics of programs that promote student development. (p. 7)

As is so often the case, the reader wants to ask what in Heaven's name researchers and evaluators and those who set them to their tasks think they have been doing for the past thirty years if this has to be spelled out now? And why have we kept mandating a particular form of schooling for language-minority children if we know so little about whether it is working?

In fact, as the report correctly notes, federal and state policies supporting bilingual education were adopted in a "leap of faith," and "basic research did not help inform practice. Nor did program evaluation research..." (p. 24). And what research and evaluation did not do before this educational strategy was developed (bilingual education was mandated in Massachusetts in 1971, and is mandated still), they apparently have not done since.

I want to try to be fair. It is possible that, in order to make a strong case that a great deal of research should be undertaken (and funded by the government and foundations) in every conceivable direction, the authors of the NRC report have over-emphasized what we *don't* know from the enormous and very expensive amount of research and evaluation which has already been done. If that is their strategy, it may prove a dangerous one: non-researchers like me are tempted to conclude that more research would be throwing good money after bad, and that the effort should instead go into training classroom teachers in those techniques of instruction that we have reason to believe are effective.

My colleague Maria Brisk contends that we know a lot about good *practices;* that what we do not know about, and perhaps will never know about in view of the complexity and variation of all the factors involved, is what a complete *model* of good schooling for language-minority children would be. If she is right (and I greatly respect her experience, knowledge and integrity), we should be teaching those practices to every teacher and administrator, not just to those who are preparing to work in separate bilingual programs. Every teacher and every administrator needs to know about and understand the reasons for sound and proven practices in educating the language-minority children who are very likely to turn up in their schools.[18]

Her position is in fact consistent with the fine print of the NRC report, which concedes that "we need to move away from thinking about programs in such broad terms and instead see them as containing multiple components—features that are available to meet the differing needs of particular students" (p. 158). Having made that concession, however, the report returns to the call for an overall developmental model which would "predict exact [!] nonlinear growth trajectories for the major abilities—not only the mean or typical trajectories, but also their variability" and so forth (p. 158).

I am not competent to judge whether such a model is feasible or whether it will ever be developed and validated; perhaps it would be a very good thing if that were done. Those who work in education or pedagogy as an academic discipline have long sought to make the field an exact science comparable to the natural or even, more modestly, to the social sciences, with strong and reliable predictive power. If such a general theory of learning "linguistic, social, and cognitive skills" is ever developed, it should of course take language-minority children into account. May it happen, and soon.

But until that glad day comes, I think I know enough of our present policies and practices and of their results to conclude that the interests of language-minority children in our schools will be better served by principled and theory-based experimentation on effective schooling of poor children of whatever ethnic background, taking language into account in how they are assessed and taught, than by putting our faith in research on second-language acquisition. We already seem to know a fair amount, through research, about how to develop bilingualism among middle-class children, especially if their parents are bilingual, but we know very little about how to overcome the academic under-achievement of Latino youth, or why they are out-performed by youth from other immigrant groups.

The promising work of Robert Slavin and CRESPAR, the Center for Research in Educating Students Placed at Risk of Johns Hopkins University, is a good example of such an approach. Neither for nor against bilingual education, it seeks simply to prevent under-achievement by providing a coherent instructional program. This and other ways of organizing instruction for results can be adapted to include among its objectives the development of proficiency in two languages, those of the home and of the school, if that is the freely-chosen goal of parents. Much of the research discussed in the NRC report could help to achieve that goal, if ways can be found to translate it into practice.

What cannot be justified, however, is to continue substituting a preoccupation with the language of instruction for the essential concern that instruction be effective. Bilingual education, it has become clear, is not of itself a solution to the under-achievement of any group of poor children. It is time that those of us who support bilingual education—in my case, by sending five of my children to an inner-city bilingual school—insist upon honesty about its goals and its limits. Bilingual education is a way to teach children to be bilingual, but it possesses no magic answer to the challenge of educating children at risk. Bilingualism is a very good thing indeed, but what language-minority children need most is schools that expect and enable them to succeed through providing a demanding academic program, taught very well and without com-

promise, schools which respect the ways in which children differ but insist that these differences must not be barriers to equal opportunity.

NOTES

1. *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda*, the National Research Council study reviewed here is the work of a committee of twelve research scholars led by Professor Kenji Hakuta of Stanford University and Dr. Diane August of the Council staff. It is a two-year study funded by the U.S. Department of Education and several private foundations.
2. Carl F. Kaestle, "The Awful Reputation of Education Research," *Educational Researcher*, January/February 1993, 23–31.
3. Diane August and Kenji Hakuta, editors, *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda*, Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1997.
4. Kenji Hakuta, *Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism*, New York: Basic Books, 1986.
5. For a characteristic statement, see Jim Cummins, "The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students," in *Schooling and Language Minority Students*, Sacramento: Office of Bilingual Education, California State Department of Education, 1982.
6. P. Concha, L. Garcia, & A. Perez, "Cooperation versus Competition: A Comparison of Anglo-American and Cuban-American Youngsters in Miami," *Social Psychology*, 95, 1975, 273–274.
7. I. S. Stewart, "Cultural Differences between Anglos and Chicanos," *Integrated Education*, 13 (6) 1975, 21–23.
8. Quoted by Sandra Lee McKay, "Weighing Educational Alternatives," in McKay & Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, editors, *Language Diversity: Problem or Resource?* Cambridge: Newbury House, 1988, 350.
9. Kleinfeld & Nelson, 1988, quoted by A. Lynette Pitman, "The Debacle of Native American Education," typescript, 1995, 25.
10. J. Kleinfeld, "Positive Stereotyping: The Cultural Relativist in the Classroom," *Human Organization*, 34, 1975, 269–274.
11. Charles L. Glenn with Ester J. de Jong, *Educating Immigrant Children: Schools and Language Minorities in Twelve Nations*, New York: Garland, 1996, 614–15.
12. My own take on this is that a sensible solution would be to define more clearly than in the past what students should know and be able to do, but leave individual schools more free than in the past to decide how they will help students to meet that expectation.

13. See Glenn and de Jong, 1996, pages 403–501.

14. For a more extensive discussion, see chapter 5 "The Languages of Immigrants" of Glenn and de Jong, pages 251–334.

15. Adapted from Rodolfo O. De la Garza, A. Falcon, F.C. Garcia, & J. Garcia, J., "Mexican Immigrants, Mexican Americans, and American Political Culture," in Barry Edmonston & Jeffrey S. Passel, editors, *Immigration and Ethnicity*, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1994, 237.

16. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "Should Immigrants Assimilate?" *The Public Interest*, 116, Summer 1994, 20–21.

17. Micha Brumlik, "Was heißt Integration? Zur Semantik eines sozialen Problems," in Ahmet Bayaz, Mario Damolin & Heiko Ernst, editors, *Integration: Anpassung an die Deutschen?* Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1984, 81.

18. A good place to start would be with Brisk's forthcoming *Bilingual Education: From Compensatory to Quality Education* (Lawrence Erlbaum).

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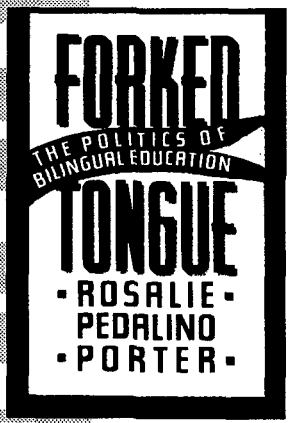

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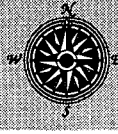

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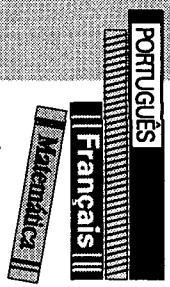

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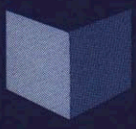

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